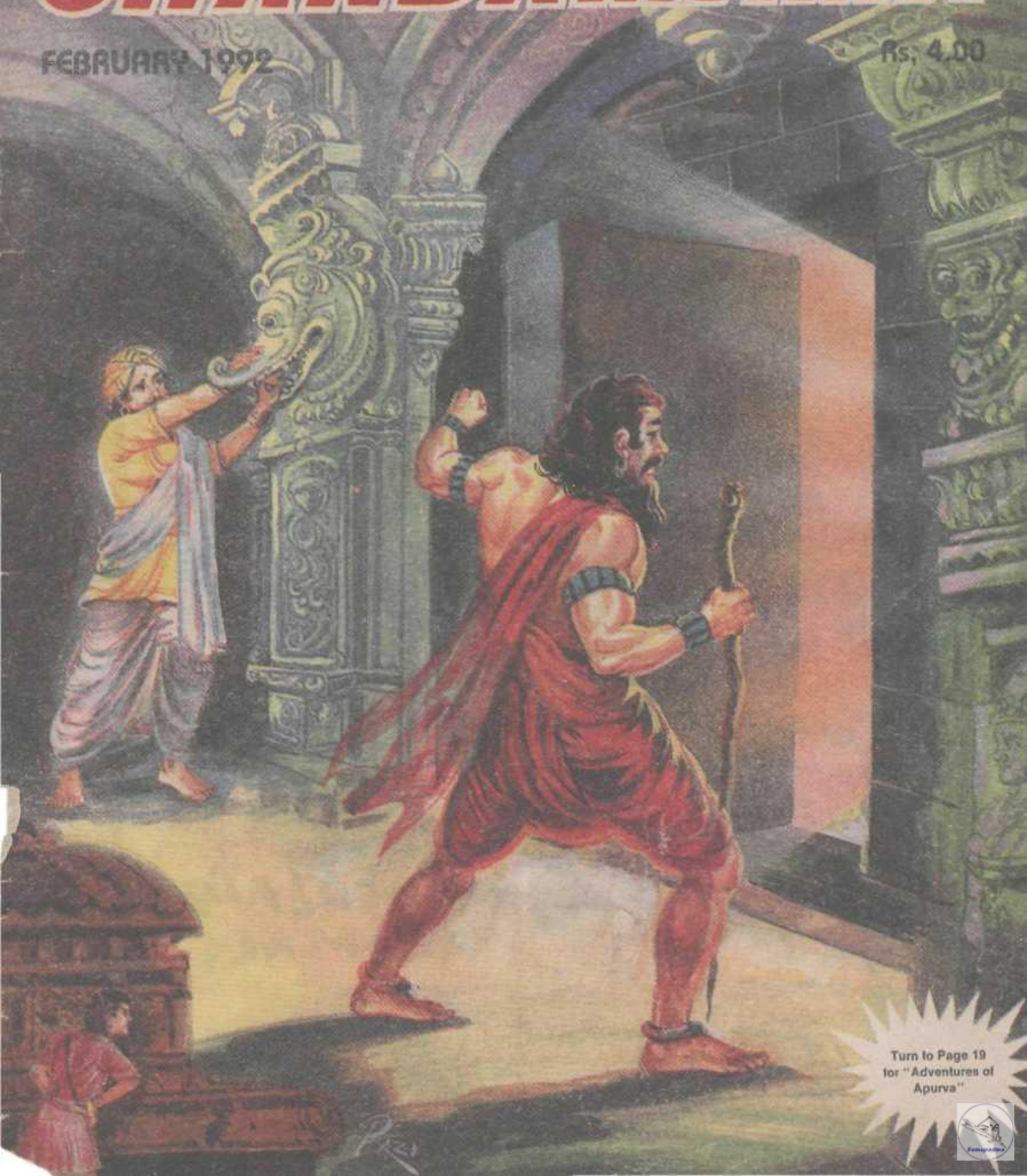


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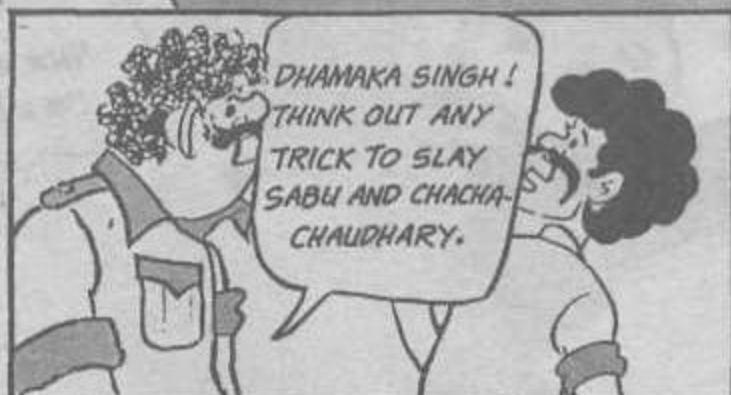
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Don't you owe the



See my tail
It's out of a
Fairy Tale



Nice 'n' funny
I'm a Bunny



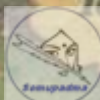
Your Bear Hugs
are warmer
than mine



Foxy is my name
But I'm ob-so tame



Tom
Tom



Give the little one a cuddles?



Give the
Li'l Panda
a Handa



I can't chase
no mice
But I'm
soft 'n' nice



No carrots to eat
But I'm a treat



hug me tight
I'll give you
a

CUDDLES

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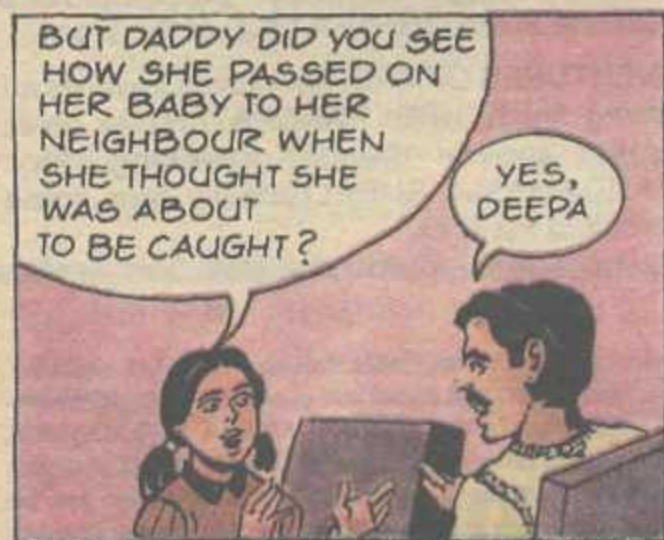
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**And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!**

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 22 MARCH 1992 No. 9

ON THE MARCH: After listening to the exploits of Hanuman in Lanka, Rama is carried away by his account of Sita. He is impatient to reach Lanka and rescue Sita. Together with Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman, Angada, and other Vanara leaders, he plans a strategy to cross over to Lanka. At Sugriva's bidding, the Vanaras get ready to lead an army to the land of the demons. Meanwhile, in Lanka, Ravana is smitten by shame whenever he is reminded of the trail of havoc left by Hanuman. He fears something worse may happen. **VEER HANUMAN** continues its chapters of suspense.

THEY SHIFT HOUSES: Carpenter Ram Singh and blacksmith Lakhan Singh reside on either side of Minister Bir Bahadur. The noise from the two houses disturb Bir Bahadur's sleep. For how many days can he tolerate? He persuades them to shift their residence, and they do. But the hammerings continue. Bir Bahadur's headache is the **LIGHTER SIDE** of the story.

ADVENTURES OF APURVA moves towards an exciting finish, while **PANCHATANTRA** gives you yet another thought-provoking story. **CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT** has some interesting features.

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Controlling Editor:
NAGI REDDI

Founder:
CHAKRAPANI

RECIPE FOR SMILE

How can anyone be ever smiling and cheerful? This question was posed by some school children, and the answer they got was: Work hard, be honest and sincere, love your country, and always do your duty.

The answer came from none other than the President of India, when a group of children from a school in Delhi met Shri Venkataraman at an exclusive "Press" conference. They were familiar with his face, having seen it often on the TV. And they had found him ever smiling.

And the recipe he revealed can be imbibed, assimilated by not only children, but by the grown-ups, too. Work hard. This applies to everybody who is engaged in one work or another. There is no question of anyone 'taking it easy'. Everybody has to put in a minimum amount of work, for the stipulated period of time. Unless people work hard, there cannot be any progress, any development, any continuity for others to take up after one's turn is over. Two shining examples are Germany and Japan, both ravaged during the Second World War. But, like the legendary phoenix rising from its ashes, the two countries have again become factors to reckon with, all because their people worked hard.

Be honest and sincere. Does this need any special emphasis, any repetition? These are qualities that bring people closer. Love your country. It is people who make the nation. And if the people love each other, have a kind word for the others, respect their feelings, they would not wish any harm to come to them.

Lastly, do your duty. This is what our holy books stress. They go a step further: do your duty unmindful of or not expecting results. The results have already been willed for you. If that be so, the actual carrying out of one's duty becomes an easy affair. You will certainly have a smile on your face, and a cheer in your heart.

GHALI GETS TOP U.N. POST



Mr. Boutros Ghali, 69-year-old former Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt, on New Year's day succeeded Mr. Perez de Cuellar to probably the most coveted civilian job in the world—that of the Secretary General of the United Nations, who is often described as the 'superman' of the world body and the most respected troubleshooter in world politics.

Mr. Ghali was a unanimous choice of the U.N. Security Council and it was later endorsed by acclamation in the General Assembly. As Minister in charge of External Relations, he had

successfully brought about an accord between Egypt and Israel in 1979. What is known as the Camp David treaty, it saw the ending of decades of conflict between the two countries. Recently, he played a key role in bringing about unity among the Arab nations to decry the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. These two acts, among others, earned for him an unenviable reputation among world statesmen.

Mr. Ghali takes over as U.N.'s sixth Secretary General at a time

Mr. Ghali's predecessors were: Mr. Trygve Lie of Norway (1946-52), Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden (1953-61), U Thant of Burma (now Myanmar) (1961-71), Dr. Kurt Waldheim of Austria (1972-1981), and Mr. Perez de Cuellar of Peru (1982-91).

when the world body is called upon to ensure maintenance of peace in two crucial regions—in Kampuchea, where the warring factions have ended their over 20-year-old enmity and rivalry, resulting in the formation of an interim Supreme National Council to work towards elections and establishment of a truly democratic form of government, and in Yugoslavia, where republics like Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence from the Federation and have as a result been subjected to war-like ravages for the last six months and more, though there have been several attempts to bring about a peace bilaterally and with the help of sponsoring nations, like the U.S.A. and the former Soviet Union, besides the European Community. The U.N. peace-keeping forces have already reached the two areas.

While the U.N. will be busy intervening in regional conflicts and in peace-keeping efforts, the new Secretary General will have to direct his attention to long-standing demands for a reform of the U.N. set up and policies. One of the changes suggested is the broadening of the Security Council, to include Germany and Japan as permanent members. Very recently, a former U.S. ambassador to India, Mr. Patrick Moynihan, opined that India, too, deserves a place as a permanent member.

When he was informed of his selection, Mr. Ghali said: "It's quite an honour for me, and for my country. I believe the U.N. will play a role in the enormous changes taking place, and I will do my best."

When it was founded in 1945, the U.N. had 51 members. In September last year, the number rose to 166, with the admission of the three independent Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the two Koreas—North and South—and the two Pacific Island nations of Micronesia and the Marshall Island.





REWARD

Abdul Aziz was the Sultan of Baghdad. He was quite different from his predecessors, who sentenced people to suffer whipping, amputation of limbs, even death, for their crimes. Abdul Aziz, however, gave them a chance to repent and waited till they reformed themselves, so that he could give them pardon and provide them an opportunity to return to a life of dignity, honesty, and compassion. Soon, the number of crimes came down during his rule.

The Sultan did not have any children for a long time. Then he became a father. To mark the birth of a son, he distributed a lot of items to his subjects. One of them got a sackful of wheat. When he took it home and opened it, he found a gold coin in

the wheat. "This must have got in by accident. Let me go and return it to the Sultan rightaway," he told his wife.

The woman was greedy. "I think you're a fool," she rebuked her husband. "It's our fortune to get the coin. After all; nobody has seen it or does know about it. Let's keep it and keep quiet about it."

The man was extremely honest and he did not listen to his wife's suggestion. He went back to the Sultan and handed the coin to him, explaining how he found it in the sack of wheat.

The Sultan complimented his honesty, and gave him a reward of fifty gold coins and sent him back home happy. Soon the news spread, and one wealthy gentleman decided to call on the Sultan



the next day. 'If that man could return one coin and receive a reward of fifty coins, why can't I give the Sultan a hundred coins and get from him five thousand as reward?' he argued with himself.

The next day he put on some old, torn clothes and went to the Sultan, carrying a bag of hundred gold coins. "Sire, the other day you were kind enough to give me a bag of rice. To my surprise I found these hundred coins in the bag. I could have quietly kept them with me, but I didn't. You see I'm a very honest person," he said, politely.

But the Sultan could see

through the game! For, despite his unkempt appearance, the man wore diamond and gold rings on his fingers. Abdul Aziz also remembered the previous day's incident and surmised that this greedy man was trying to take advantage of his munificence. He decided to teach him a lesson.

The Sultan called his minister and said, "Put the money into the treasury, and give this man a formal certificate of honesty." Without looking at the man's face, he left the court. If he had, he would have seen his shocked silence

(An Arab Folk-tale)

Advice when most needed is least heeded.

As you make your bed, so you must lie on it.



A BIRD NAMED SOOCHEEMUKHI SEES WHAT THE MONKEYS ARE DOING.



MY DEAR FRIENDS, DON'T WASTE YOUR ENERGY. IT'S NOT FIRE IT'S A FIREFLY

SHUT UP! AND GET OUT!



I FEEL WARM. HAH! HAH!

FRIENDS! PLEASE LISTEN TO ME! IT'S ONLY A FIREFLY



THE MONKEYS GET VEXED WITH SOOCHEEMUKHI AND KILL HER.



KARATAKA CONCLUDES THE STORY

THUS MY GOOD ADVICE HAS BEEN WASTED ON YOU!



YOU'RE BORN LIKE THAT!



HAVEN'T YOU HEARD THE STORY OF SUBUDDHI AND DUSHTABUDDHI?

WHO ARE THEY?



IN A TOWN THERE LIVED TWO FRIENDS, SUBUDDHI, DUSHTABUDDHI. THEY TRAVELLED TO A DISTANT LAND...



अङ्गणवेदी वसुधा कुल्या जलधिः स्थली च पातालम् ।
वल्मीकश्च सुमेरुः कृतप्रतिज्ञस्य धीरस्य ॥२॥

ON THEIR WAY ...



LOOK HERE, MY FRIEND!
I'VE FOUND A TREASURE!

WONDERFUL!

MY GOD! ONE THOUSAND
GOLD COINS!



YOU'RE VERY LUCKY, MY
FRIEND!



WE BOTH ARE LUCKY! WE
SHALL SHARE IT!



THANK YOU!

I MUST HAVE ALL OF IT FOR
MYSELF!



WHY ARE YOU HESITATING,
MY FRIEND? TAKE YOUR
SHARE!



NO! NO! NOT NOW! LET'S
HIDE IT UNDER THIS TREE
AND RETURN LATER WHEN
WE NEED IT!

ALL RIGHT, LET'S
DO SO!

AFTER SOME DAYS, DUSH-
TABUDDHI RETURNS TO THE
PLACE WHERE THE TREAS-
URE IS HIDDEN AND TAKES
IT AWAY



NEXT DAY HE GOES TO SU-
BUDDHI'S HOUSE.



OH! IT'S YOU! COME
IN!

MY FRIEND, LET'S GO AND
GET THE TREASURE!



DUSHTABUDDHI AND SUBUDDHI
GO AND DIG UNDER THE TREE



IT'S GONE!

IT'S NOT
HERE!

To a resolute man determined to achieve his goal, the earth is no greater than a stage in his courtyard, the ocean no vaster than a pool, the nether-world no different from the land, Mount Sumeru no bigger than the ant-hill.



पुराणमित्येव न साधु सर्वं न चापि काव्यं नवमित्यवद्यम्
सन्तः परीक्ष्यतरद् भजन्ते मूढः परप्रत्ययनेयबुद्धिः ॥



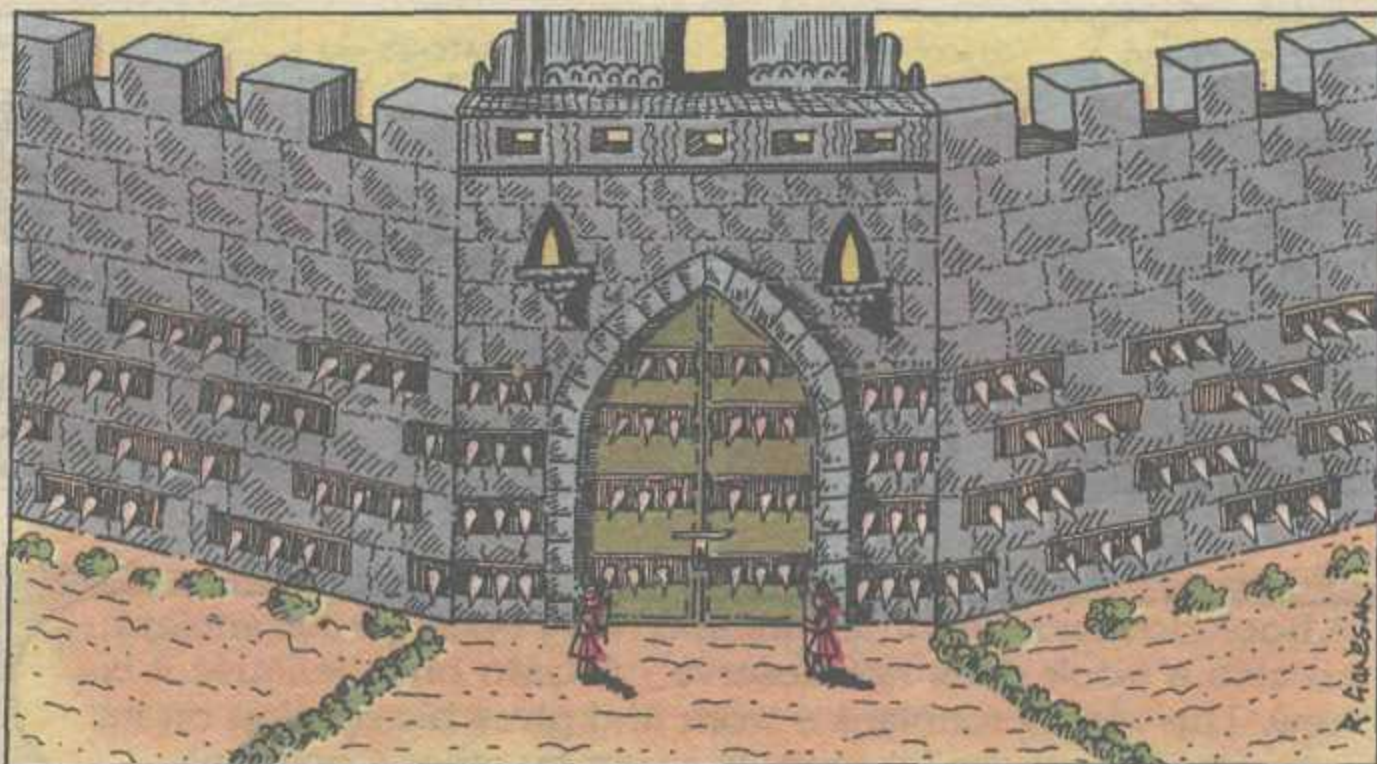
A book does not become sanctified only because it is ancient; so also a book does not deserve criticism only because it is new. The wise scrutinises a work and gives his opinion on its merit whereas the ignorant is swept by other's opinions.

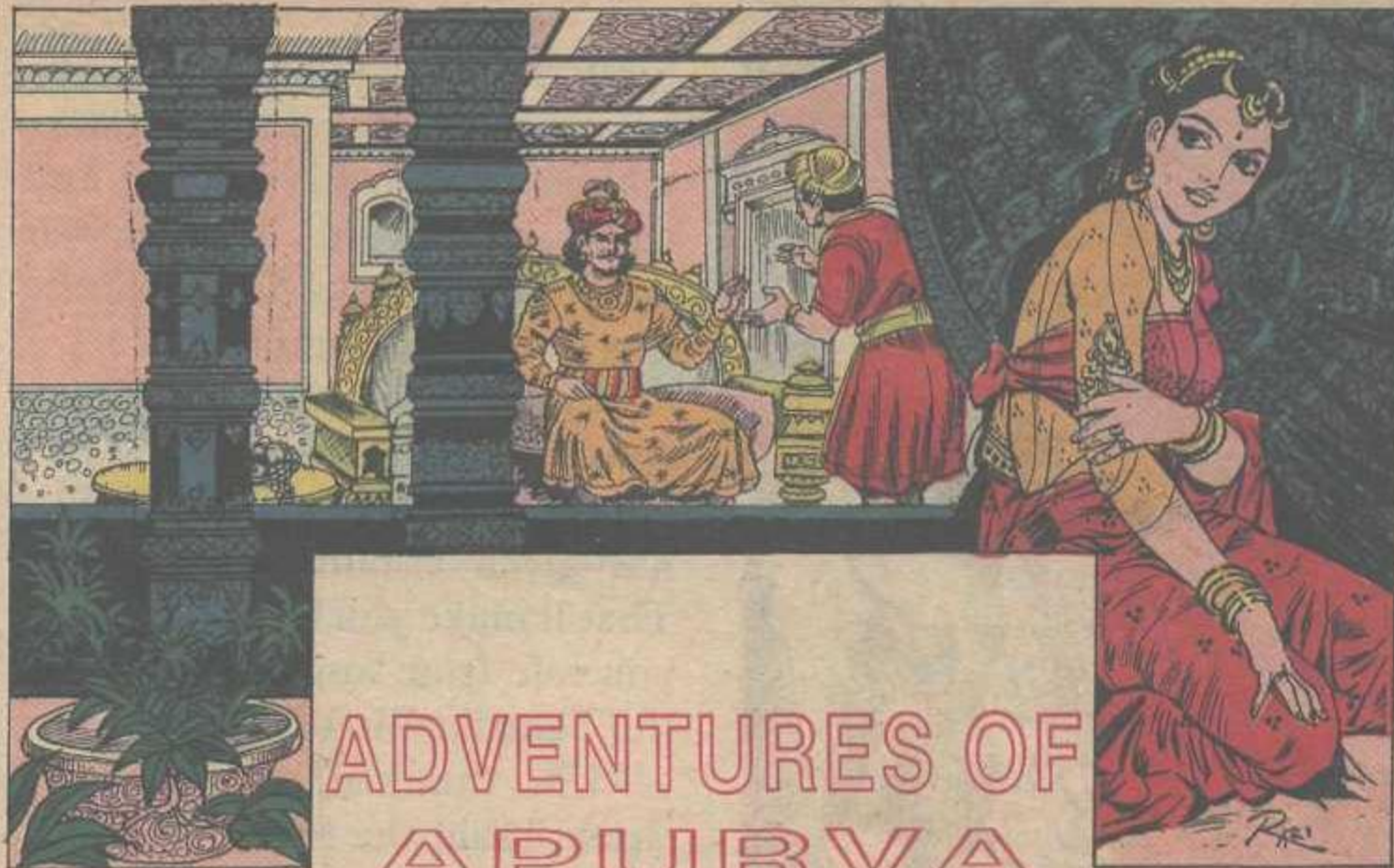
As Sturdy as a Horse!

Reader U. Jagadeesh, of Pamulapadu, has found the phrase *Chevaux-de-fraise* 'impregnable'. Two reasons: the correct spelling is 'frise' and *chevaux* is the plural form of *cheval*, the French word for horse. The expression means, a spiky defensive structure in fortresses to stop cavalry attack. The spikes prevent the horses from getting past the structure. The horses, of Friesland, a maritime province of the Netherlands, were once famous for their sturdy character.

Our friend Jyotiranjana Biswal (Dhenkanal) is familiar with the expression "tongue in cheek", but would like to know more about the other cheek, in the idiom "cheek by jowl". Cheek, as everybody knows, is the side portion of the face below the eyes. And jowls are the lower parts of the cheek, covering the jawbones on either side. Both these parts of the anatomy—cheek as well as jowl—are not separated or far away from each other like, say, the jaw and the knee! So, "cheek by jowl" only means side by side, very close together, and not far apart. Shall we say, for several years "Jyoti" lived cheek by jowl with "Ranjan", without realising they are so close to each other!

A.A. Gawai, of Jaripatka, is in a fix. He wants to know how he can express 60 paise in rupees, whether he should write Re. 0.60 or Rs. 0.60. The first is correct, because 60 paise is less than a rupee (Re. 1.00). If someone gives him 41 paise more, he will have Rs. 1.01 with him, as it is one paisa more than one rupee. He need not wait for another 99 paise to raise his rupee (Re.) to rupees (Rs.)!





ADVENTURES OF APURVA

12

(Apurva, now a young man but continuing to be tiny in size, has found out that a Tantrik, with the help of the king's Chief-minister, is planning to take hold of the Moonlight Diamond worn by the princess. At the same time, the Tantrik's mentor, an old witch, is keen to have the princess so that she can suck her youth into her own body.)

It had been a good time for the kingdom. The monsoon had been kind and the people were happy with a bumper crop throughout the land. King Viswa Varma decided to celebrate his daughter's birthday with pomp and show. He spoke about this to his Chief-minister.

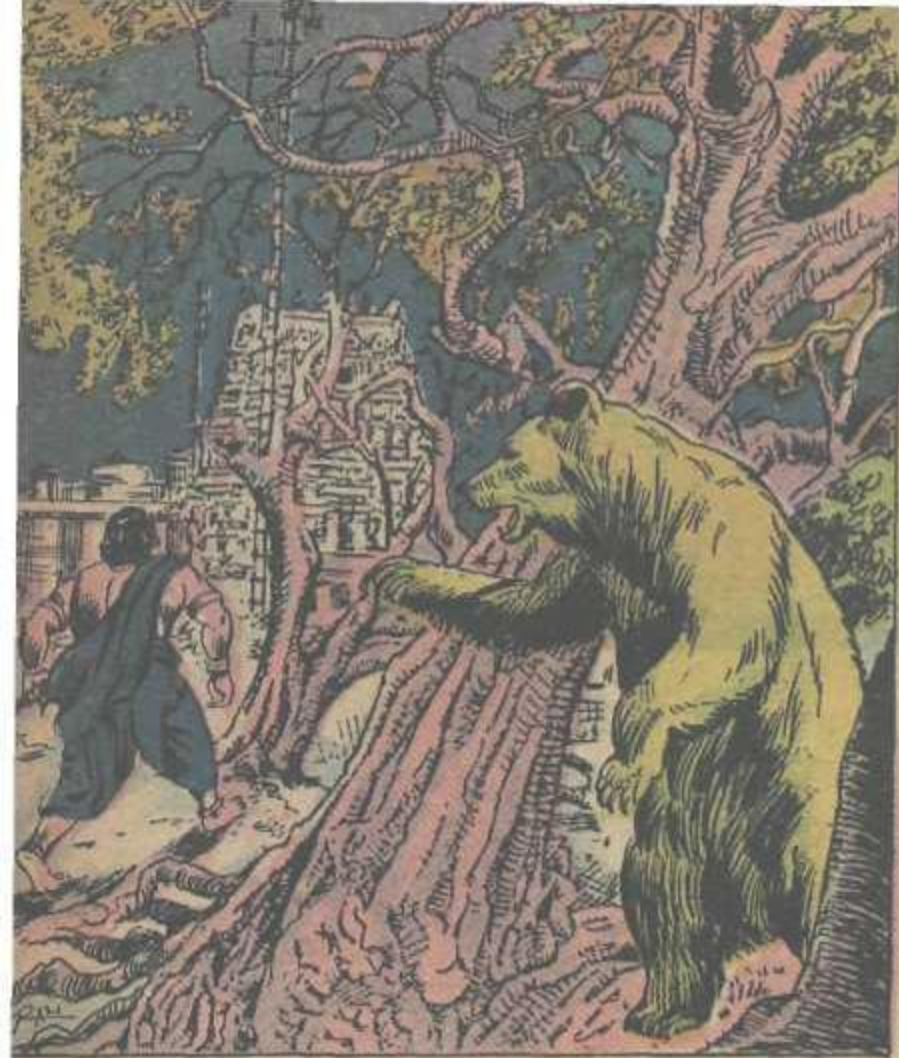
The Chief-minister was more

enthusiastic about the proposal than ever. The king thought that it was his worthy minister's affection for the princess that made him so happy!

It was a rainy night. Someone, as dark as the night itself, was approaching the temple of Mother Durga which stood a little away from the capital town

THE CONSPIRACY





of Rudrapur. Durga was not only the family deity of the king, but the presiding deity for the whole kingdom. The temple was situated at a lonely place. Nobody stayed there at night.

Behind the temple spread a wide forest. Half of the forest belonged to Rudrapur, the kingdom ruled by Viswa Varma, while the other half belonged to Roopkunj.

The fellow who was approaching the temple stopped under a banyan tree, a hundred yards behind the temple and closer to the forest. He got off his vehicle. And what was his vehicle? A

huge bear. "Wait here!" he commanded the poor creature which was shivering, and advanced towards a particular arch of the temple. Someone else was waiting for him there.

"I'm sorry to have made you wait for a rather long time. I had gone to the witch once again. She has given a talisman for you. That'll make you brave and keep you safe from any danger," said the Tantrik, Vir Vikat.

"I'm thankful to the holy witch," said the fellow who was waiting there. Needless to say, he was none other than the Chief-minister.

The Tantrik tied the talisman round the minister's arm. Little did the minister know that the power of the talisman was quite different from what the Tantrik had told him. By wearing it, he would not be brave, but act as the most obedient lieutenant of Vir Vikat!

"Have you consulted the almanac? When is the auspicious time for the princess to visit the temple on her birthday?" asked Vir Vikat.

"It's an hour after the sunset."

"Good. It should be dark enough," said the Tantrik. "Only



a month more is left for our doing everything necessary to achieve our goal. Isn't that so?" asked the Tantrik.

"Yes, but I don't foresee much difficulty. I've brought the key to the temple door and I know how to open the secret tunnel. As you know, the tunnel is for emergency only. In any dangerous situation, the king or the queen or any other important member of the royal family can come away to the temple, enter the tunnel, and escape into the forest. Naturally, it has never been used for such a purpose, though occasionally it is cleaned by the king's most trusted bodyguards. We've to see that the passage remains clear," said the minister.

"That's right," agreed Vir Vikat.

The two opened the temple door and shut it behind them. The minister lighted a torch. Then both entered the sanctum sanctorum. A few earthen lamps were still burning in front of the deity. There was a dark and damp strip of narrow space behind the deity, between the deity's throne and the wall. On the wall there were some sculpted figures. The minister threw



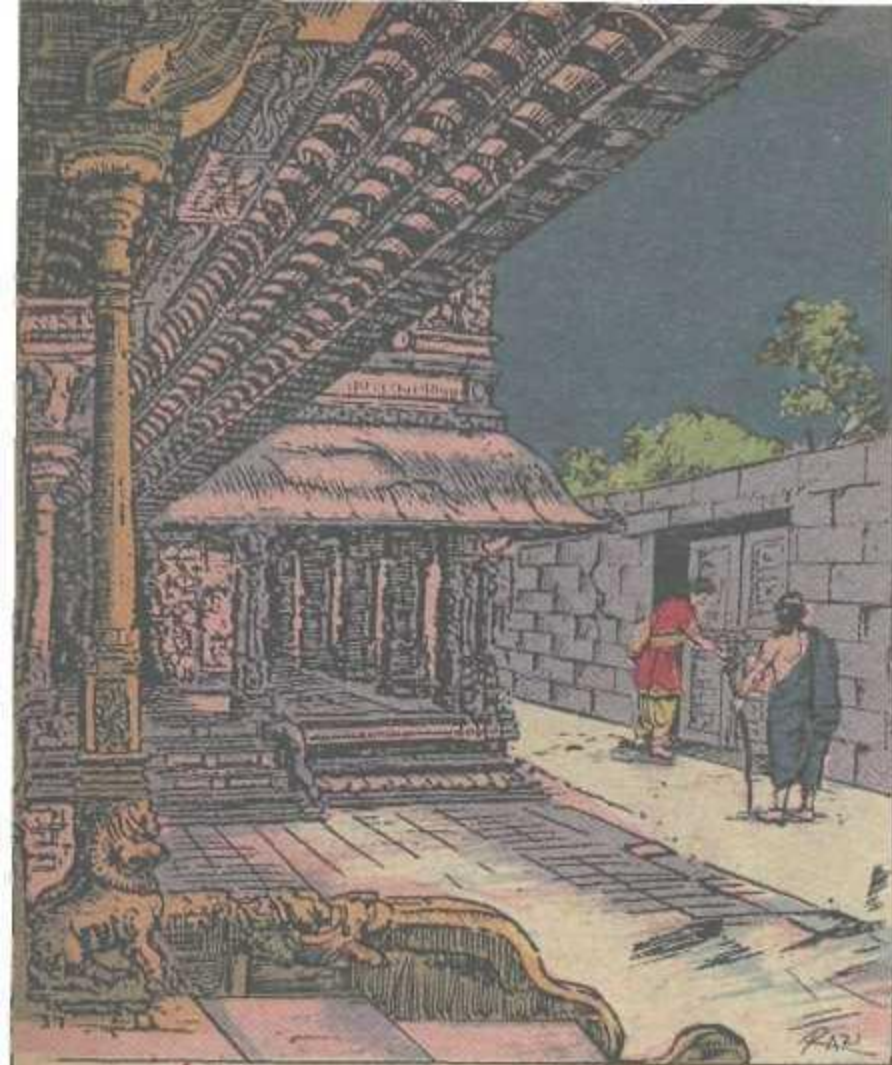
both his hands into the jaws of a giant's figure and tried to separate the jaws. Soon there opened a passage.

The two fellows stepped into the tunnel.

Till then Apurva was stealthily following them. Now he stopped and wondered, should he try to close the tunnel? But that might not serve any purpose, even if he succeeded in doing so. The two would go out of the tunnel through the other end. Apurva did not know where the tunnel's other opening was.

So, he decided to do the next best thing: follow them through





the tunnel. But he was about to step in when the jaws of the stone giant got clamped. He understood that a little inside the tunnel there was some device to close the jaws.

Apurva came out of the temple and waited. The two conspirators must come back to the temple, to lock it from outside. He must listen to their conversation and find out how they wished to utilise the tunnel.

It happened just as he thought. Tantrik Vir Vikat and the minister came out of the temple after an hour. As they locked the temple, the minister said, "Once

the princess is pushed into the tunnel, it'll be your responsibility to take hold of her and shut the tunnel's entrance in the way I showed the device to you. You must then hurry to the other end of the tunnel. Your men must stand there, ready to carry her away immediately."

"Not my men, but the witch herself will be there to take charge of her," said Vir Vikat.

"Good, but everything must be done as quickly as possible. Despite the festive atmosphere, it can't take more than five minutes for her maids to notice her absence. The search will begin immediately," said the minister.

"Even if the search begins, can they suspect that the princess had been pushed into the tunnel? How many know about the tunnel being there? How many know how to open the secret passage?" asked Vir Vikat.

"Very few know about it. The king, the queen, the priest, myself, and the general," answered the minister.

"I've an idea. You say that it'll be difficult to win over the priest. If we fail to influence him, it'll prove dangerous. He may even disclose our plan to the king,"



observed the Tantrik.

"What's your idea?"

"In the evening, just before the princess's visit to the temple, we'll kill the priest. I'll put on a disguise myself to look like him. I'll lead the princess alone to the spot behind the deity's throne under some pretext and push her into the tunnel and escape myself and shut the door," explained the Tantrik.

"That's a good idea. But must you kill the priest? He's such a good man!" said the minister.

"Minister! Should you be so faint-hearted? How do you propose to rule a vast domain once you become the monarch? You know the miracle the Moonlight Diamond can perform! It can one day crown you

the king over the whole world!" said the Tantrik, laughing. He then added, "All right, don't worry. We'll detain the priest, instead of killing him. Now let's disperse," said the Tantrik.

Apurva who stood behind a pillar listening to their conversation was in a dilemma for a moment. Whom should he follow now—the Tantrik or the Chief-minister?

He decided not to follow any of them, now that he had more or less a clearer idea about the conspiracy. He must bring everything to King Viswa Varma's knowledge so that the conspiracy can be forestalled.

How to do it was the question.

—To continue





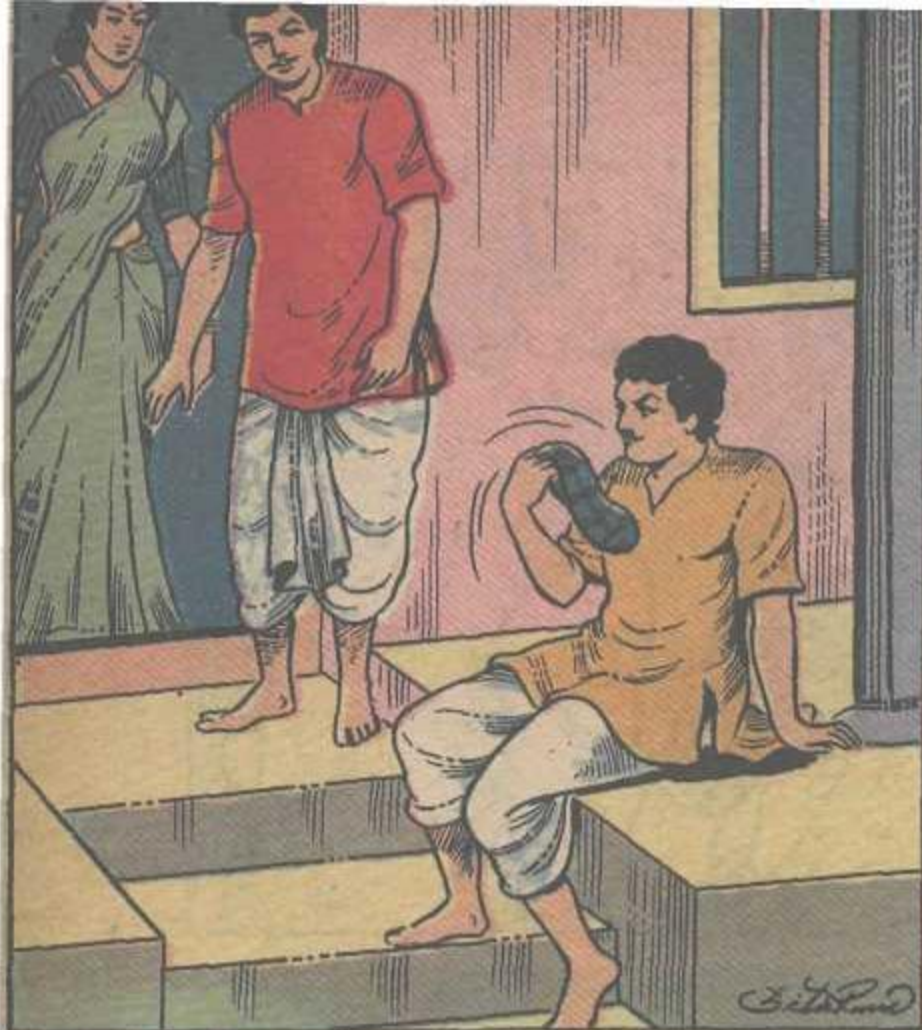
THE LIGHTER SIDE

GRANITE-PORRIDGE

Velan of Villupuram lost his parents when he was barely one year old. He was looked after by their neighbours who were themselves childless, and so they spoilt him by their affection. He would not go to school, neither would he help his foster-father on his farm. He would laze around the whole day and would not give a moment's rest to his foster-mother. Times were hard, especially because the previous year's drought was severe. As Velan had now grown into a strong youth, his father insisted

that the boy went out in search of work and looked after himself, and thus lessen the burden on the ageing couple.

One morning, Velan started out, without any idea where he would or could go. He wandered from place to place. Some kind-hearted people engaged him in work lasting a day or two and gave him either food, or money to buy food. On days when he would not find any work, he would drink water and starve the whole day. He was not only strong but strong-willed, too,



and would not think of borrowing money or begging for food. Hard times, it was, but it helped him sharpen his wits and before he realised it, he was becoming clever.

He was roaming for three days without work and without food, and on the fourth day he feared he might die of hunger. Suddenly he saw a small hut at a distance. He was certain that whoever lived there would not have any work to give him, and begging for food was just out of the question. But he decided to try his wits, and luck.

His way was along an aban-

doned quarry. He picked up two glistening stones almost the size of a lemon, tied them in one corner of the towel he was using as a turban to cover his head from the hot sun, and walked with all hope and determination.

Two children playing in the portico saw him approach and went inside to tell their parents. He sat on the verandah wiping his brow and fanning himself with the towel, when a middle-aged villager came out, followed by his wife. "You must have walked a long distance? Chinnu, bring some water, will you?" he called out to his little daughter.

The girl brought some water in a brass tumbler, and Velan drank it in one gulp. "Can I have some more water? No, not for my thirst, but to wash two stones," he said very casually.

Before her father could say anything, the girl went in and brought some more water in a pot. The villager and his wife watched with curiosity as Velan untied the stones and washed them carefully. "Ah! I can now make some granite-porridge."

"Did you say *granite-porridge*?" the man asked him. "What's that?"



"I've never ever heard of granite-porridge!" interjected his wife.

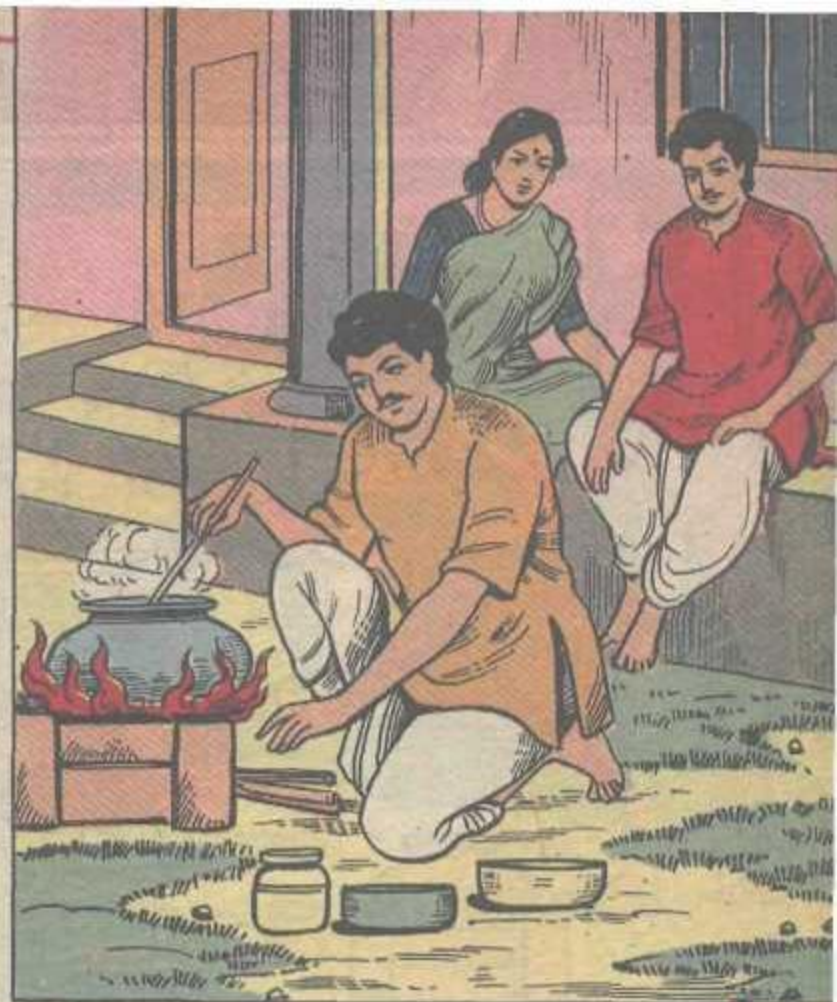
"It's porridge made out of granite!" answered Velan, without raising his face. He was busy wiping the stones with his towel. "Pure and simple porridge. It can be tasty, too, sometimes," he added, after a moment's pause.

The villager and his wife looked at each other, and said, almost in unison, "But how will you make it?"

"Oh, that? I'll make a fire here in the courtyard. You can bring me a vessel with some water," said Velan as he cleared a place. The villager went in search of firewood and his wife brought a clean shining vessel and water in a pot. "How much water would it need?" she asked of Velan, who had by then managed to light a fire.

"About half of it," replied Velan without even looking at the vessel. "I won't need much. But as none of you have ever tasted granite-porridge, I shall make enough to go round. You can fill up three-fourths of the vessel."

He placed the vessel on the fire and waited till the first bubbles



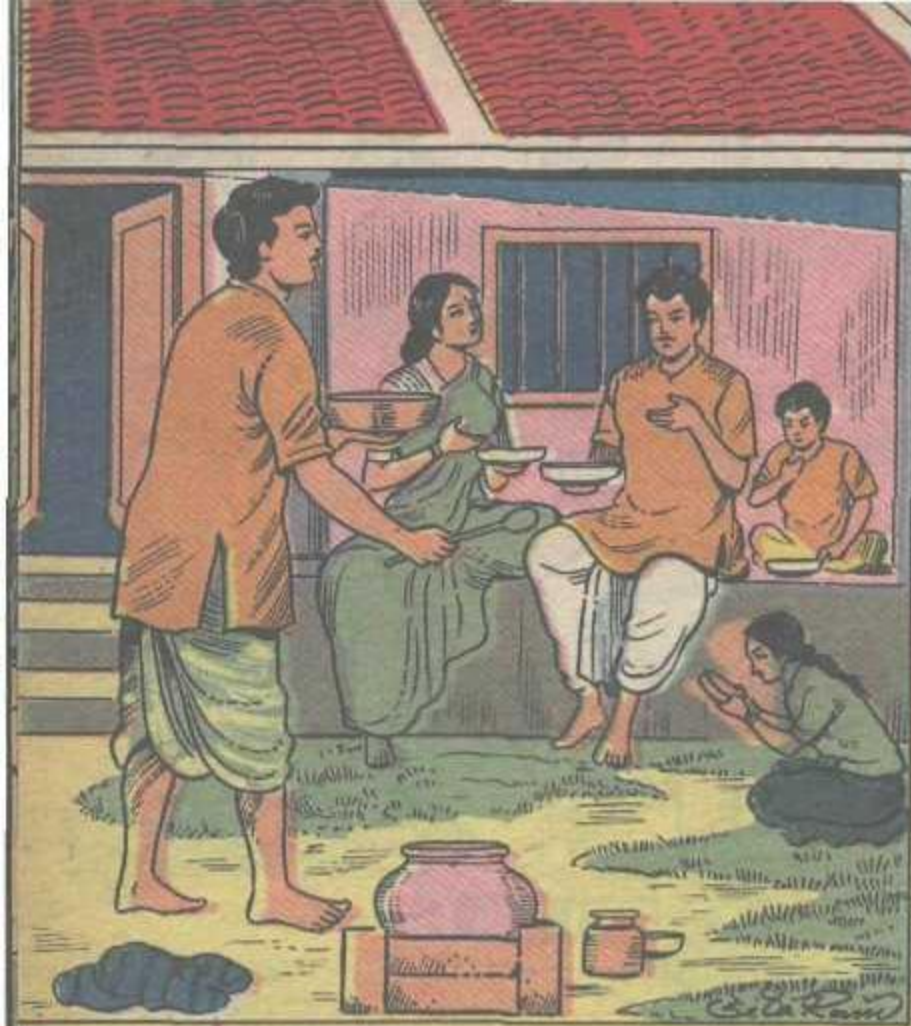
came up. He then dropped the stones into the water. When the water started boiling, he began to stir it. He stirred, and stirred, while keeping up a non-stop conversation. Suddenly he exclaimed, "Did I add salt to the water?"

"You never asked for it," reminded the villager's wife as she hurried inside to fetch some salt.

"Thank you, Amma," said Velan politely. "You see, salt will help soften the stones." And he continued to stir the boiling water.

"Is there anything else that you





might have forgotten?" asked the villager, who was watching Velan with great interest. "How about some *masala* powder?" he suggested.

"Ho! That'll be excellent. I'm used to eating the porridge with just salt," said Velan, very humbly, "but now that you've agreed to taste it, I think we can add *masala*, too. Wonder whether you keep some *masala* with you, Amma?"

"Oh yes! Oh yes!" The woman brought a tin from inside and waited for directions from Velan, who was still busy stirring the water. "It looks as though this is

taking some time to thicken. Amma, if you can spare some rice..." Velan did not complete his sentence, because the woman had already hurried inside. She was back in a trice, with some rice in a tray.

"Will this be sufficient?" she asked Velan.

Velan took a handful of rice and put it into the vessel. The water stopped boiling for a while. "I think I will add the rest of it also," remarked Velan. "Now it'll be quite thick and there'll be enough to go round for all five of us. We shall add the *masala* when it starts boiling once again," he revealed his culinary knowledge.

The conversation was now mostly between the husband and wife about their own food habits, with Velan joining in monosyllables. After all, he had to concentrate on the porridge, which was slowly showing signs of thickening. Velan picked up the tin and put a pinch of *masala* into the concoction and continued to stir it. "Nice smell!" he complimented the woman. "You made the powder?" The villager's wife merely smiled, rather coyly.

"Call the children, the porridge is almost ready!" Velan



alerted the couple. By then, their mother had already brought five clean bowls and placed them near Velan. He took the vessel off the fire and kept it on the verandah to cool. He then washed his hands and face once again. The villager, his wife, and two children sat in a circle, leaving a place for Velan, who was pouring the porridge into the bowls. He handed them one by one and sat near the villager with his own bowl.

"Why do you call it granite-porridge? It's a soft paste," remarked the villager. "It's really good."

"I don't think I've tasted anything like this before," said the woman. "I never knew one could prepare porridge with granite stones!" she added,

cleanly forgetting that the stuff contained other ingredients as well.

"I, too, had come upon the recipe by sheer accident. Now wherever I go, I carry these two stones with me." After he had eaten an extra bowl of porridge that was left in the vessel, he called for water to wash the two stones. They were as hard as he had brought them! He wiped them clean with his towel, tied them in one corner, and got up to go.

The villager, his wife, and children bade him an affectionate farewell. As Velan trudged his way, he wondered whether he would meet with similar luck at another way-side home. He gave a pat to the stones and muttered, 'Granite-porridge!'





A QUESTION OF CREDIT

King Mahendra was an ideal ruler. He cared for the welfare of his subjects and made all efforts to ensure that they led a peaceful life. He and his ministers often went about in disguise to find out whether there were any shortcomings in the administration and whether the people were put to any difficulty.

One day, two friends were walking along the street when a beggar accosted them. Ramu told his friend, "Would you mind sparing a rupee? I don't have any money with me; as soon as I go home, I shall return the rupee to you. Poor man! I'm afraid he can't even see properly."

Luckily, Gopu had some money with him and he could spare one rupee, which he handed to Ramu. He gave the coin to the beggar and turning to

Gopu, he said, "I'm grateful to you. I shall give you back the rupee the moment I go home."

Gopu protested. "Why should you bother, Ramu? After all, you wanted the rupee for charity, isn't it? Don't think of returning it to me. I won't take it from you."

The friends did not know that the king was watching all these proceedings and listening to their conversation. Mahendra wondered, who's more blessed? Ramu? Or Gopu? True, it was Ramu who actually gave the alms to the beggar. But hadn't the money really come from Gopu?

The next day, as he sat in court, he narrated the incident and posed the question: "Who's more blessed, Gopu who spared the rupee, or Ramu who borrowed the money and gave it to the poor beggar?"

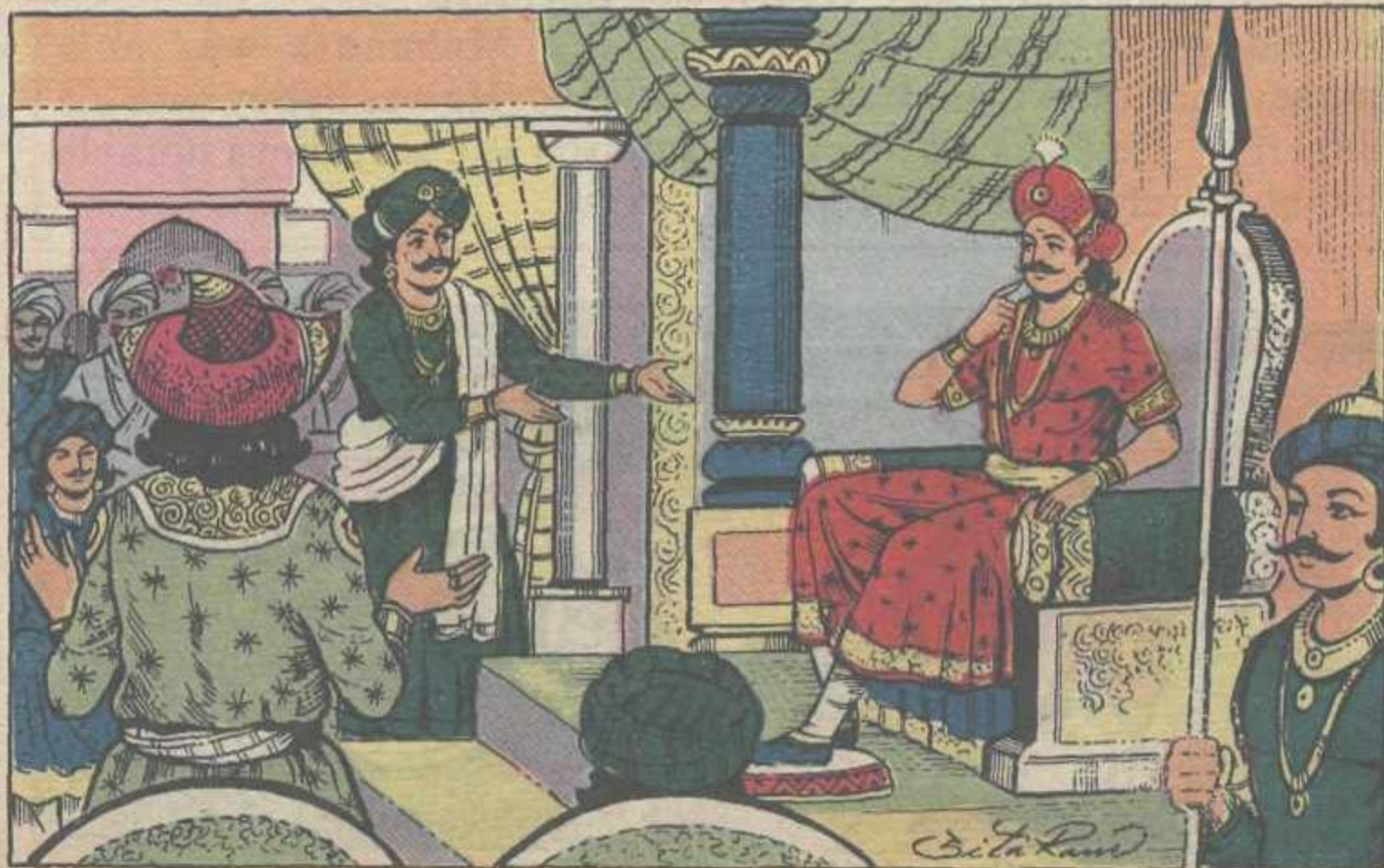
One section of the courtiers argued that the alms was given by Ramu, and whatever credit was due, it should go to him. Another section was firm that the rupee had come from Gopu and so he should get the credit. Yet another group felt that the blessings would go to both of them.

Mahendra somehow or other was not quite satisfied with their answers. "All right, I shall give all of you some more time to ponder the problem. Come back tomorrow and give me a more satisfactory answer." It was then that he noticed his minister, Anand, who had not expressed any opinion at

all. "Anand, you were with me yesterday to witness the incident. What do *you* think about the whole thing?"

"Gopu had money with him, yet he didn't think of giving any alms to the beggar," said Anand, "whereas Ramu did not have any money, yet he thought of charity. He deserves all credit. After all, he only borrowed the money from Gopu to give it to the poor man."

The court jester interjected and offered an answer. "O king, there is only a half-truth in what the minister says. Ramu may receive the blessings, but Gopu had spared the money and so the



entire credit should go to him. Remember, he had declined to take it back from Ramu, though he had assured Gopu that he would pay him back. The loser ultimately was Gopu."

"It's not a question of anyone losing money," argued Anand. "Gopu had only spared the money for his friend, Ramu, and not anybody else. And Ramu borrowed the money from him after promising to return it."

"If that be so, don't you think some credit should go to the person who lent the money?" asked the jester, making a valid point, to which Anand replied: "No, I don't think any credit should go to Gopu. He had money, but didn't think of any charity. He was, however, unable to refuse his friend when

he asked for a loan. It was only when he knew that the coin was to be given away as alms that he declined to take it back from Ramu.

"He is kind-hearted and really wanted to help the beggar. Unfortunately, he didn't have any money with him, so he borrowed a rupee and gave it away as alms. And what had Gopu done? He only agreed to his rupee being given away to the beggar. Initially, he didn't think of any charity at all, though Ramu had thought of it. Such people are rare to find. I've no doubt, Ramu should get all the credit," said Anand convincingly.

King Mahendra was now satisfied. He was happy with his minister and gave him a suitable reward.



CHANDAMAMA

SUPPLEMENT-40



BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

TIGER

Once popularly called the Royal Bengal tiger, this magnificent animal was found in abundance in the Sunderbans region of Bengal. Truly, the tiger is the undisputed monarch of Indian forests. No wonder, they attracted hunters among rulers, and tiger-hunting was an exclusive royal sport. But it took a heavy toll on the tiger population, which was once around 40,000. Twenty years ago, in 1972, their number was less than 2,000. The tiger was then declared an endangered species, bestowed with the title "National Animal", and was covered under the Project Tiger scheme, which has brought it back from the brink of extinction. There are now a little over 4,000 tigers in 16 major sanctuaries and other locations.

Of the cat (*felis*) family, the tiger (*panthera tigris*) is a super-predator and "eats anything that moves". Its favourites are sambar, deer, black buck, and boar. A good swimmer, it catches fish if no other prey comes its way. It lives in evergreen jungles. From head to the tip of the tail, it averages 8 to 9 feet (280-290 cm) and weighs nearly 200 kg. Its life span is between 15 and 20 years.

When injured, the tiger often turns a man-eater. However, there is an old saying in some parts of India: If you meet a tiger, call him Uncle, and he'll let you pass!

During the recently concluded Music Festival in Madras, one evening the audience rose in their seats to give a standing ovation to the artiste on the stage. He was the 12-year-old flutist Shashank, who had just concluded a 2-hour recital. Prime time (6 to 9 p.m.) in music festivals is normally reserved for veterans and *vidwans*. But Shashank had been given that 'slot', and he did not disappoint the connoisseurs as well as critics. He really earned, and also deserved, such a tribute from the audience.

Master Shashank showed signs of some understanding of music even when he was less than a year old. He liked some of the *ragas*, while he would be restless when his father, Subramaniam, a flutist himself, played certain other *ragas*. By the time he was three, he could identify all the 70 odd 'master' *ragas*. Seeing his interest in music, Subramaniam arranged for regular lessons in music for his son. He even thought of an instrument for the boy—violin—but Shashank, one day, put it aside and picked up one of father's flutes and started playing on it. It was apparent that Shashank must have been closely watching how his father worked his fingers on the flute. The



'MASTER' WHO IS ALSO A MAESTRO

boy has since never looked back.

The family shifted from Bangalore to Madras—the capital of Carnatic music—to enable the boy to imbibe the best in that style of music. Subramaniam even gave up his assistant professorship in a college to devote all his time to attend on his promising son.

Shashank had his debut in Adelaide, Australia, when he was ten.

On his way back, he gave recitals in Singapore and Malaysia. His first ever performance in India took place in a most prestigious auditorium in Bombay in September 1990. One of the leading music associations in Madras invited him for last year's music festival, and this year invitations came one after the other, with the organisers being confident what a draw he would be.

Yet, Shashank is like any other normal boy. He hates going to school; sometimes he would be stubborn and not touch his flute at all. He would then need to be cajoled, coaxed, and bribed, says his father! He prefers to play with his sister, Shantala, than with boys of his age. Given an opportunity, he would spend all his time listening to audio cassettes.

Will you be surprised to be told that he is the sole breadwinner in his family?

DO YOU KNOW?

1. Who was the first Secretary General of the United Nations?
2. When is the Commonwealth Day celebrated?
3. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote "*Discovery of India*" when he was imprisoned in a jail. Which jail was it?
4. Who came to be called "The Lady with the Lamp"?
5. Who were Prophet Muhammad's parents?
6. When was the first "flying saucer" reported?
7. At the Crucifixion, Jesus Christ asked one of his disciples to take care of his mother, Mary. Which disciple?
8. In the Old Testament, who is mentioned as Noah's grandfather?
9. What was the first man-made object to land on the moon?
10. When did Mao Tse-tung proclaim the People's Republic of China?
11. Who had described the legendary land of Atlantis in his works?
12. The Wright Brothers are credited with the first flight by man. What was their actual occupation?
13. Italy's first woman doctor achieved fame in a totally different field. Who was she?
14. An American actress was for the first time portrayed on a stamp. Who was she?
15. Cricket is the national game of a country. Which country?

ANSWERS

1. Dag Hammarskjöld.
2. May 24.
3. Ahmednagar Fort.
4. Florence Nightingale, who started the nursing order, after she began attending on those wounded in the Crimean War (1853-56).
5. Abdullah and Amina.
6. On June 24, 1947, when a pilot reported having seen "a saucer skimming over water".
7. John.
8. Methuselah who, according to the Bible, lived for 969 years. Now, a common expression to denote a very aged person.
9. The Russian space probe called Luna-2 crashed on the moon on September 13, 1959.
10. On September 21, 1949. The Soviet Union was the first country to recognise it—on October 2.
11. The Greek philosopher, Plato.
12. They ran a bicycle shop and factory.
13. Maria Montessori, the famous educationist, after whom is called a certain education system.
14. Grace Kelly, who won an "Oscar" Award for her film "The Country Girl".
15. Australia.



Boy with a Golden Heart

When lakhs and lakhs of rupees is being donated by the Governments and philanthropists in India for the amelioration of the earthquake ravaged people of U.P., a contribution of some six hundred rupees coming from 10-year-old Yan Zengyi of Shanghai in China may look odd. The 100 yuan that he donated is half of his earnings from his role in a TV serial. He had earlier donated the other half for the flood victims of China earlier last year. He was moved when he saw the earthquake-affected children on the TV. Yan's donation and letter were taken to Beijing by his father, who waited for more than an hour at the Indian embassy to hand them over to the ambassador.



News Flash

Rowing Across Pacific

"Every minute was like an hour, every hour like a day," said Gerard d'Aboville. What this 41-year-old Frenchman did *not* say was that the 133 days he took to cross the Pacific in his 8m-long rowboat "Le Sector" were like 133 years! He set out from the east coast of Japan on July 11 and rowed across 10,000 km to reach Ilwaco, near Portland in Oregon, U.S.A., on November 21, "visibly exhausted and emotional." Sheer grit, one may add.



GENTLEMAN GIANT



Once there was a rich merchant. He had three daughters and three sons. The youngest daughter was so lovely and charming that she was named Beauty. The elder girls were naturally envious of her. They were given to boasting, while the youngest one was quiet and humble in her behaviour. Her sisters liked to be seen in the company of the wealthy and would never miss attending their parties. They believed in a life of merry-making and insisted that they would marry only from

among the rich.

Beauty was not at all selfish or haughty. A motherless girl as she was, she preferred to spend time with her father, at home. When a proposal came for her, she pleaded with her father, "I don't think the time has come for me to get married, father. Let me stay with you all for some more time."

But fate willed it otherwise. Suddenly, one day, the merchant found himself to be a pauper. His creditors came and took away everything, except his small farm far away from the town and the



small house there. He had no other go than to leave the town and go to the village.

His elder daughters did not like the prospect of leaving the town. "How can we live in a village? All our friends are here, and they'll take care of us." They were mistaken. Who would care for paupers? In fact, in their heart of hearts the townsfolk did not have any regard for the arrogant girls. Instead, all their admiration was for the youngest one, Beauty. Many came forward offering to look after her. But she decided to go with her father.

Ultimately, the elder girls were persuaded to go to the village,

where the merchant and his sons worked on their small farm. Beauty helped them as much as she could. In the beginning, she found the work too much and tiresome. But as days passed, she got used to everything. Her sisters just lazed around the house.

Their father felt sorry for his youngest daughter. He praised her simplicity and modesty and was aggrieved over the arrogance of his elder daughters.

After a year of their life in the village, one day, the merchant received a message that the ship that had carried his merchandise and was believed to have been lost in mid-sea had come back safe. Everybody was overjoyed, especially the two elder girls.

As their father got ready to leave for the town, they surrounded him asking for this, that, and many other things. He turned to Beauty. "And what would my lovely little maiden wish for?"

She merely shook her head. When her father insisted, she said, "Just a rose!" Her father smiled, understandingly.

The merchant reached the town, but he was unable to secure

the value of the goods that the ship had taken, and he had to go back empty-handed.

His journey was through a forest. Before he could cross over to the village, the sky became overcast; a heavy downpour followed. He not only lost his way but his horse tripped on the pathway and he was thrown off once or twice. He was hungry and shivering in the cold. He could not find any shelter and walked without knowing where he was going.

Suddenly, he saw a light through the thick foliage. Must be a house, he thought, comfortingly. He walked towards the light, which was only receding from his sight. There was no house as he had hoped. At last, he came to a stable where he tied his horse, and walked ahead. He soon came upon a huge mansion. The door opened when he gave it a push. The fireplace was lit and the table had been laid with several dishes. The merchant sat there, warming himself.

He waited for a long time for somebody to turn up, but nobody appeared. By now he could not contain his hunger any longer. So he ate whatever he

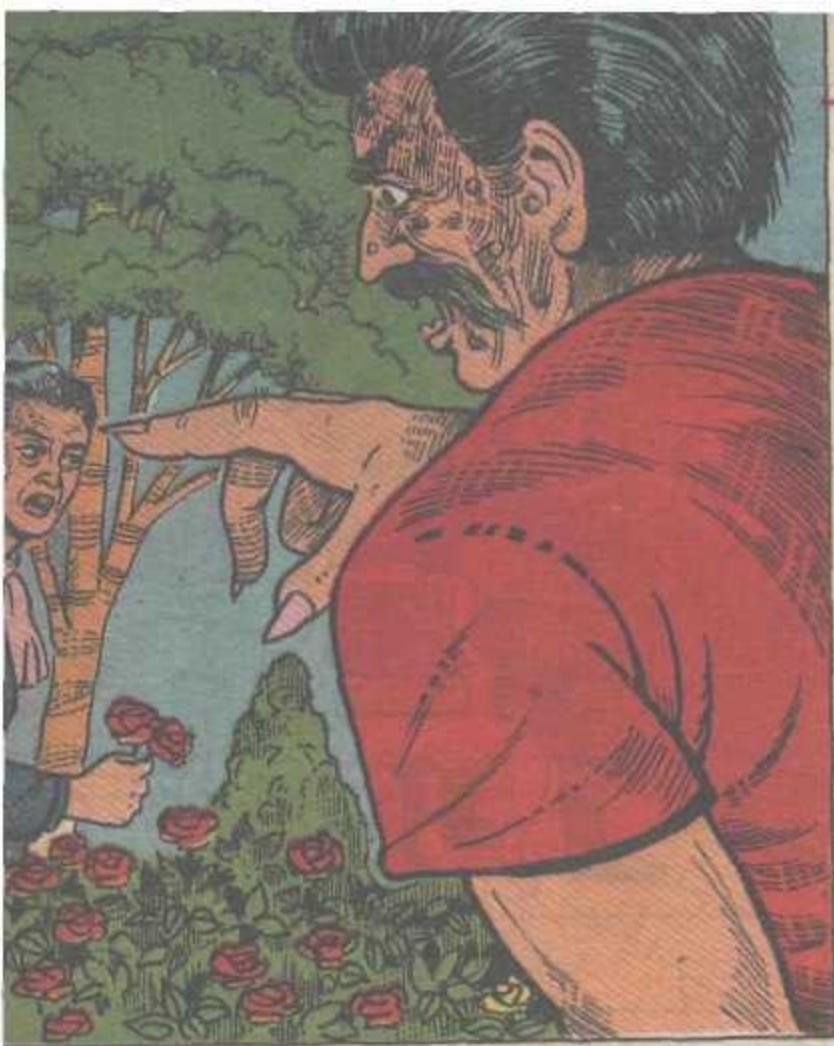


found on the table. Afterwards, he set out to inspect the place. He went into several rooms. There was not a soul in any one of them. Then he reached the bedroom where he found the bed neatly made and so inviting. The moment he lay down, he was fast asleep.

He woke up rather late and found, to his great surprise, a new pair of trousers, shirt and coat waiting to be worn. He wondered whether it was not a kind thought of the owner of the mansion. He looked through the window and saw a beautiful garden full of exotic flowers.

It was then that he remem-





bered his youngest daughter's wish. He plucked a bunch of roses. He was taken aback when he heard a loud noise. He turned round and saw a giant figure glaring at him. "You came here tired and hungry and were given food and shelter. Yet you had the affront to pluck my flowers. Do you know that I value them more than my life? You've to suffer punishment for your act."

The merchant pleaded: "Bear with me, Sir. I did not pluck the flowers wantonly. I was taking them for my daughter who just loves flowers."

The giant brushed aside the man's explanation. "I don't want

to hear any of your excuses. If you don't want to die, then your daughter will have to take your place. And if she is not willing to die for your sake, you yourself will have to come back here in three months time. I can't grant you any other concession!"

Would anyone send his children to death to save himself? He promised to come back within three months. 'Maybe I'm fated to die!' the merchant ruminated.

His daughters were very happy to see him back home. He handed the roses to Beauty and said, "You've no idea how much they're worth! I've to pay the price with my life." He then narrated all that had happened in the forest and later in the mansion.

Beauty listened to her father, but she did not shed any tears. Her sisters promptly pulled her up. "See! All this has happened because you wanted a flower."

Beauty was not upset by her sisters' scolding. "Don't worry! I'm going to offer myself to the giant."

While her sisters did not react to this, their brothers shouted, "No, that won't happen as long as we are alive! Let him kill any

or all of us."

Their father intervened. "I'm proud of all of you. But none of you need die for my sake. After all, I'm growing old; how many more days will I live? Let me die. You're all young, and I want you to live long."

Beauty protested. "Don't prevent me from going to the mansion and facing the giant." Her sisters were very happy to hear her decision. Good riddance, they thought.

The next morning, father and daughter started for the forest. By night they reached the mansion. After tying their horses in the stable, they proceeded to the mansion. There they found the dinner already laid. The merchant did not feel like eating anything, as he was all the while lamenting for his favourite daughter. But Beauty insisted that they both ate all that had been kept on the table. As they were eating, they heard a loud noise outside and guessed that the giant was on his way there. Beauty was terrified at seeing the giant standing in front of her.

"Have you come here of your own accord?" he thundered.

"Yes, I have..." replied Beauty



with trepidation.

The giant turned to the merchant. "You kept your word. You may go back tomorrow morning." He then left the room.

They both retired for the night. The merchant could not get a wink of sleep for a long time, but Beauty was fast asleep the moment she closed her eyes. She had a dream, in which an old woman came and assured her, "Beauty, your sacrifice won't go waste. Your father will be saved."

Beauty woke up and told her father about the dream. The merchant felt somewhat relieved, but it was a heart-rending farewell that he bade in the morning.



After her father had gone away, Beauty became pensive. But she remained calm all the while. She knew that the giant would come for her in the night. She decided to roam the place before he came. Suddenly, she came upon a door where it was written "*Beauty's Home*". She was surprised. Greater was her surprise when she opened the door and went in. There were many books neatly arranged in shelves and musical instruments, too. Why had they been kept for her if she was to live only for one more day? she wondered.

She pulled out a book and opened it, when some lines in

gold struck her eyes: "Welcome to you, oh Beauty! Shed all your fears. You are the queen of this mansion. Make your wish known; it will be granted."

'What else should I wish, except to see my dear father?' she told herself, and the next moment she saw in a mirror there their farmhouse and her father just arriving there to be welcomed by her sisters! The image in the mirror disappeared the next instant.

Noon came, and she found the luncheon laid. As she ate, she could hear some lovely music. Later when she was eating dinner, she heard the giant coming. He called from outside, "Beauty, may I join you at the table?"

"As you wish," she replied, in a trembling voice.

The giant seemed to have understood her predicament. "No, no!" he said. "You're the queen of this mansion. Your wish alone will prevail. I won't remain here, but do tell me, am I so ugly to look at?"

"Yes, what you say is correct," said Beauty. "I haven't learnt to tell a lie. However, you seem to be good at heart."



"Beauty! You may eat your dinner at peace. All that you see around in the mansion is yours. I only want you to be happy. I'd be sad if you're not," said the giant.

Beauty now felt a little bold. "You seem to be well-behaved. I'm glad you're kind-hearted, too."

Beauty felt relieved as she could face the giant. But what happened a little later belied all her expectations. For, the giant asked her, "Beauty, will you marry me?"

The girl almost fainted, but soon recovered, and said boldly, "No, I won't." She was trembling with fear when she said this, but the giant did not get angry.

"All right. I'm going now," he said simply and left the room.

Left alone, she wondered whether she had been unkind to him. 'Pity, such a good-natured being should be so ugly!'

Beauty spent the next three months in that mansion. Every evening, the giant would return at dinner time, converse with her, and go away after she had finished eating. Beauty was able to understand him somewhat deeply, and at times she felt he was not that ugly to deserve



ingratitude. In fact, she even began to wait for his arrival before she ate her dinner. He would not forget to ask her that one ominous question: "Will you marry me?" before he left the place.

One day, she took courage in telling him, "I wish I could say 'yes', but I don't want to cheat you. I can only see you as a good friend, nothing more."

"Yes. I know my drawbacks, but I love you very much," said the giant very emotionally. "You promise me that you'll stay here for ever."

Beauty was shy for a moment. But before he could notice it, she



said, "I shall give you that promise, but I wish to meet my father just once; otherwise I'll die of sorrow."

"That shouldn't bother you. You can go, but mind you, I may die if I don't see you every day." Now the giant really wept.

Beauty pacified him. "I shall come back in a week's time. My sisters have been married, my brothers have all joined the army, and my father is all alone."

"You may go in the morning. But don't forget your promise."

That night, Beauty was very sad. She was sorry for the giant. When she woke up, Beauty found herself in the farm-house! Her father rushed to embrace her. He had

taken her to be dead and gone long ago. Suddenly, she remembered that she had no change of dress. Her exclamation brought the maid there. She told Beauty that she had seen two boxes in her room. When Beauty went and opened them, she found that they had, besides her robes, a lot of gold and diamonds and other precious stones. She thanked the giant in her mind and wished her sisters were there to share everything.

The sisters were sent for and they came with their husbands. They did not appear to be happy at all. When the sisters saw Beauty dressed like a princess, their jealousy knew no bounds. They went out to hatch a conspiracy against their sister. "Let's not allow her to leave after one week. When she fails to keep her promise, the giant will become angry. He'll then kill her," said the eldest one. The younger one agreed. "Yes, let's pretend that we love her."

Beauty was overcome by their affection. She agreed to their plea and said she would stay back for one more week, though she felt sorry for the giant.

On the tenth day, she had a dream. She was back in the mansion, where the giant was



fighting for his life. He rebuked her for being unkind to him. His groan woke her up. 'How sad!' Beauty told herself. 'It's not his fault that he has become ugly. He's kind, good at heart. What more do I want? I can be happy with him, unlike my sisters. No, I won't make him wait any longer.'

The next morning she found that she was in her bedroom in the mansion! She was very happy. But that night the giant did not come back. Suddenly, she was overcome by grief. Would he have died? She went almost mad, as she searched for him in every nook and corner. At last she saw him lying near the lake. He was breathing very hard. She brought some water and sprinkled it on his face.

The giant was cross with her. "You forgot your promise, didn't you? I decided to die of hunger, but I am glad I could see you once again. Now let me die in peace."

"Don't! From this moment you're my husband," cried Beauty. "I'm sorry, till now I considered you only as a friend. I can't live a life anymore without you as my husband!"

The next moment, the mansion was brightly lit with illumination all over, and there was festivity all around the place. But Beauty did not notice any of them. She was looking at the giant, because he had disappeared and in his place stood a handsome prince.

He told her that he had just come out of a curse. "I incurred the displeasure of a demoness who cursed me with ugliness until I found a beautiful maiden agreeing to marry me."

Beauty led him into the mansion, where more surprises were in store for her. Her father, sisters and brothers were already there to greet her!

—Keyar



A French Dream


"It is fantastic, it is fabulous!" said France's Henri Leconte when his compatriot, Guy Forget, beat Pete Sampras of the U.S.A. in the reverse Singles in the final of the Davis Cup match in Lyons on December 1, giving France the title after a gap of nearly 50 years. Four days earlier, Laconte himself had beaten Sampras in the first Singles. The success was a "dream come true" for the non-playing captain, Yannick Noah. "We've been living, eating, and sleeping this dream ever since we reached the final," he said. For France, it was the seventh Single's victory ever since the tournament was born, and the first after 1932. Sampras was making his debut in Davis Cup final in Lyons. His world ranking was seven, while Forget was placed at eight, and Leconte way down at 161. Earlier, Forget and Leconte had won the Doubles final against a U.S. pair, to get nearer to the 'dream' of a triumph.

WORLD OF SPORT



Retrospective Record

Britain's Steve Backley threw the javelin to a record 89.58m in Stockholm last July. This has been made the official world record only in January this year, though the record had been subsequently broken by Jan Zelezny of Czechoslovakia and Seppo Raty of Finland. They used an aerodynamic Nemeth javelin and Sandvik javelin respectively, while Backley had used a traditional javelin. The International Amateur Athletic Federation decided that till the rules are changed, Backley's mark should remain the official record.

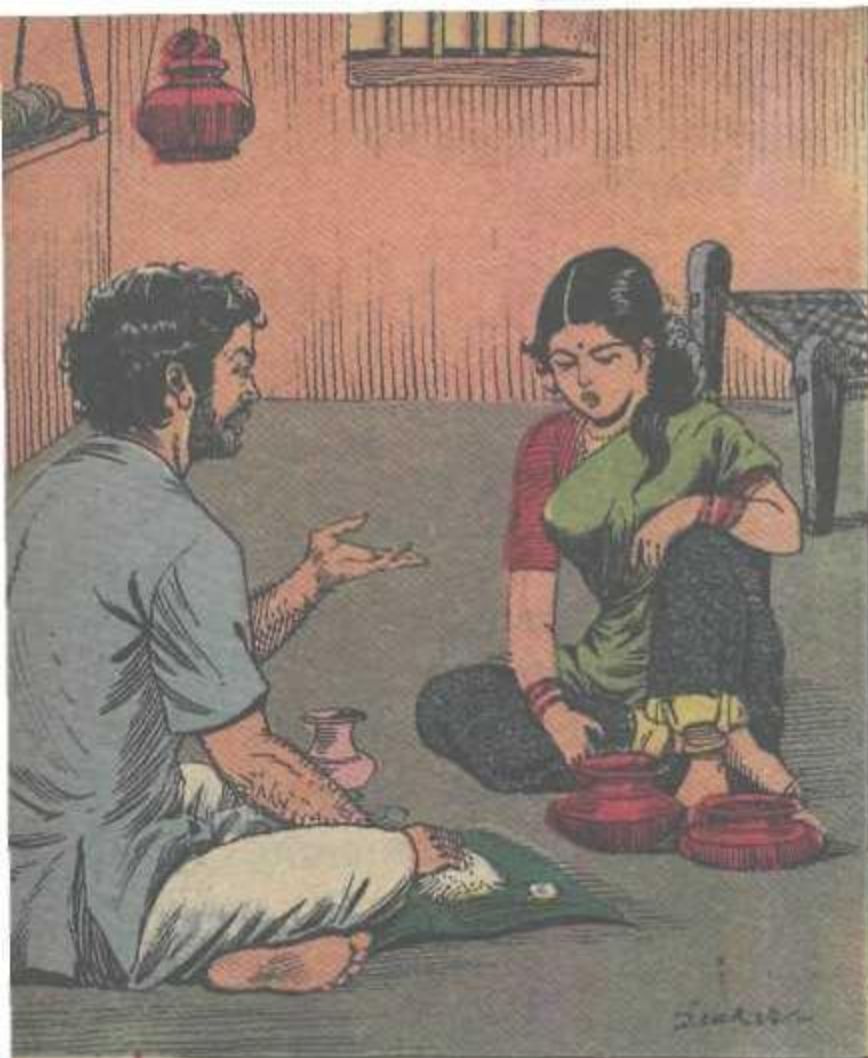


New Tales of King Vikram and
the Vampire

ONE QUESTION, THREE ANSWERS

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time, gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O king, you seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite so as to achieve something. I compliment you on your determination. To help you overcome fatigue, I shall tell you the story of a woodcutter's daughter. Listen carefully because you'll have to answer my questions at the end."



The woodcutter lost his wife and he refused to remarry. He ensured that his daughter Neela did not suffer any wants, and looked after her very well. The girl attended to all the household chores. She had a grandmother, but the old lady stayed elsewhere, on another side of the same forest.

One day, the woodcutter called his daughter and said, "Darling, don't you feel bored here, being alone? Your grandmother's house is not so far away; why don't you go there for a change? Be with her for ten days and come back. She'll be really happy to see

you."

Neela appeared reluctant. "Who'll look after you, father, when I am away?" The woodcutter brushed aside her protest and told her that he would somehow manage in her absence. After all, she was going away for only a few days.

Along with Neela went her pets, a mynah, a woodpecker, and a sparrow. The mynah managed to reach the old woman's house before Neela herself arrived. "Grandmother! You've a visitor," the bird announced her granddaughter's visit.

"Neela? She seems to have remembered her grandmother at long last," the old woman remarked. "Let me prepare some food for her." Before she could proceed to the kitchen, Neela arrived there. "Come in, my sweet child! How're you? I've been longing to see you, but you know well this old woman can't walk all that distance. How's your father? Is he all right? Any proposals for your marriage?"

"Oh, grandma! Is there anyone in this forest who'd think of marrying me? All that will happen by and by," said Neela, with a smile on her face. As she



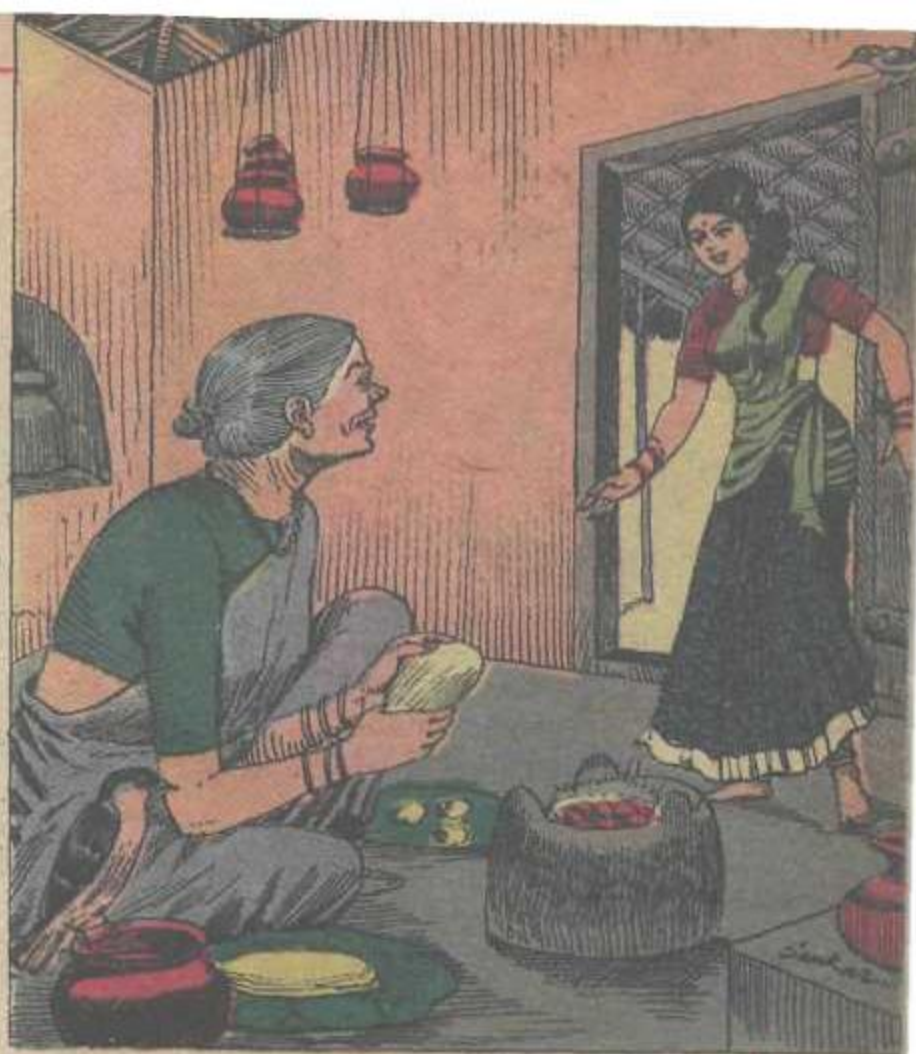
looked around, something caught her attention. She was intrigued too. "Grandma, how come you've three cots here?"

"It's a long story, darling," said grandmother, with a sigh. "I shall tell you all that later. Now, you must have your food and go to bed early. You must be tired after that long walk."

Neela went for her bath, and she hurried with her food, as she was impatient to know more about the three cots. "Grandma! You must now tell me the story of the cots," she insisted. The old lady then told her this story:

The king here has three sons; they were all born at the same time. Soon after giving birth to them, their mother passed away. Balaveera is the eldest; Athiveera the second, and Mahaveera the youngest. The king brought up his sons without giving them a chance to miss their mother. Why; he even spoilt them with his affection, with the result, they have become too lazy to occupy themselves with any work.

The king became worried. He feared that after his life time, there wouldn't be anybody to look after the kingdom. He wished that at least one of them



would come forward to shoulder some responsibilities. Alas, none of them was willing even to listen to him. At last he called them. "Look here, young men, whoever gets married first will inherit this kingdom," he told his sons, and showed them the pictures of some eligible princesses. The three princes merely looked at the pictures and did not show any interest or inclination to marry any one of them.

The king was disappointed, but he did not show it out. "All right, you need not marry any princesses. You may choose your brides yourself. But, as I told



you, whoever brings a bride first will be gifted with the kingdom." The king then saw to it that they were sent out of the palace to fulfil his wish. And do you know what they did? Every morning they would reach this forest to spend some time. By noon they would come here, eat the food they carry with them, and go to sleep till evening when they would return to the palace. It was good for me, as I didn't have to cook any lunch for me. They would share their food, and I seldom had to waste my time cooking." Neela's grandmother concluded her story.

"I shall hear more about them tomorrow, grandma. Let me now try to get some sleep," said Neela as she lay down on one of the ancient cots there. However, she did not get a wink of sleep. The cot was fested with bugs; she wondered how any one of the princes could sleep on it. In the morning she asked her grandmother, "That cot is full of bugs, grandma. Are the princes made of wood? How're they able to sleep on it? Maybe they don't have any worry in life."

Her mynah was listening to this conversation. At its bidding, the woodpecker and sparrow immediately set work on the cot and pecked out all the bugs. Neela got busy in cleaning the place of all cobwebs, dusting and decorating all the doors and windows. When the princes rode there in the afternoon, Neela was still cleaning the place. As the mynah had announed their arrival, Neela went and hid behind a door. The princes wondered whether they had made a mistake and entered a different house. "This house looks spick and span," they told the old lady. "You shouldn't have put yourself to this strain in your old age."



"It's all my granddaughter's work; I didn't raise my little finger," said the old lady. "Neela is here on a visit."

The eldest of the princes, Balaveera, on hearing this, said, "I must meet this girl; she has made this place beautiful."

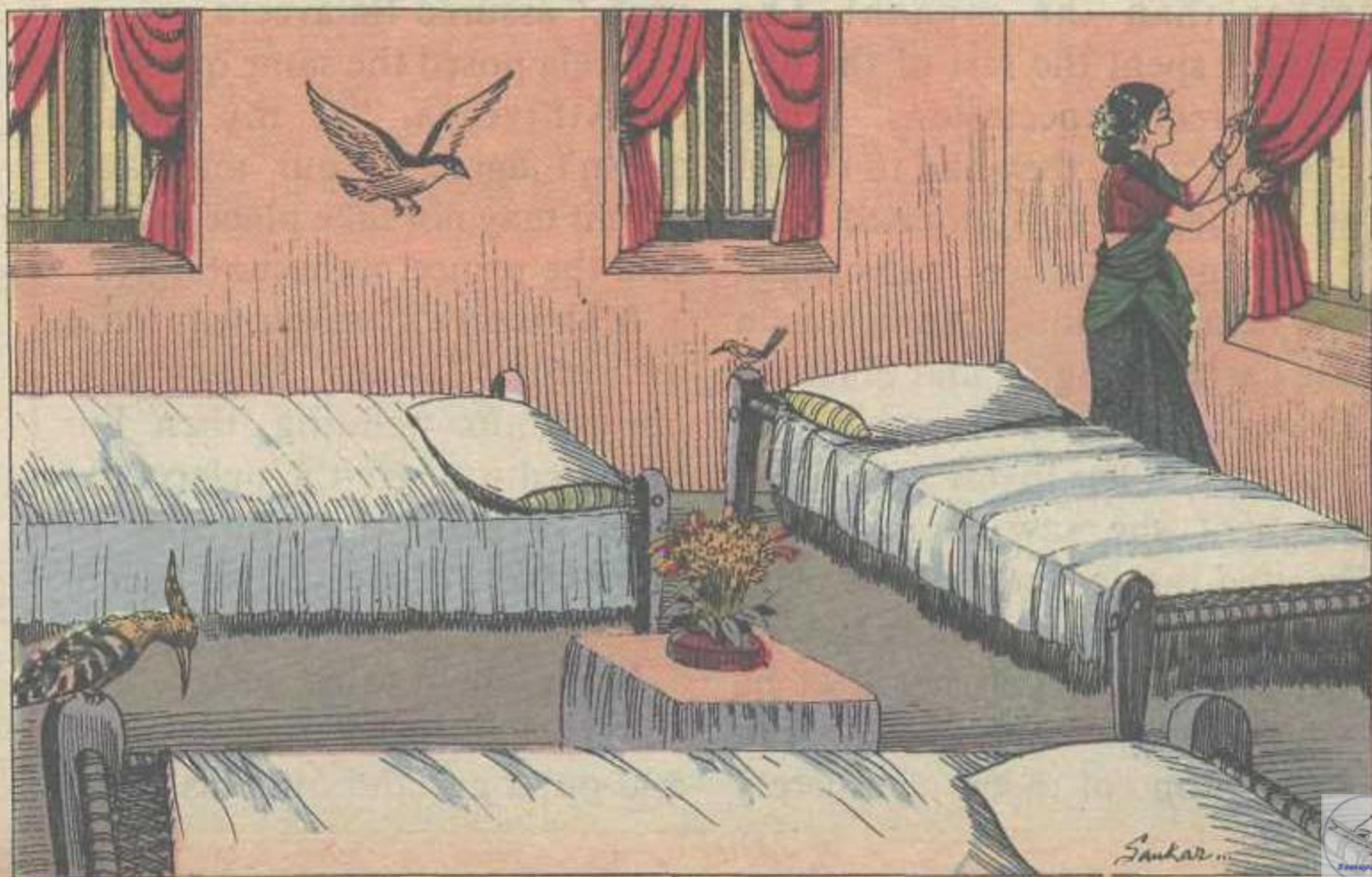
Neela's mynah, perched on the window-sill, was listening to this. "Don't think you can see her just like that, O prince!" the bird teased him. "You'll have to wait till the proper moment came for all that."

The princes were amazed that a mynah could speak, and speak with intelligence, too. They asked the old lady about the bird. "Oh it

came along with Neela," she explained. "The girl is fond of her birds, and has taught them all sorts of tricks."

The princes then ate the food they had brought. When the grandmother took her share inside, Neela sent a dish she had prepared for the princes. They found it very tasty. "Strange! We haven't tasted such a delicacy till now." The lady then told them that it had been cooked by Neela, and not her. By now the princes could not control their curiosity. "We must meet this granddaughter of yours. Please give her our compliments."

"You've to be patient for some





more time to meet our Neela." This caution came from none other than the mynah! The princes spent the rest of the day with great expectations. When evening came, they had to return to the palace, disappointed.

When the princes came back the next afternoon, Neela was in the garden, singing and plucking flowers. They were struck by her beauty and her lovely voice. The moment she saw them, Neela hurried inside. Each of the princes found an opportunity to seek the old lady to tell her that he would like to marry Neela. And to each one of them, she merely

replied, "Let me first ask Neela."

When her grandmother broached the subject with her, Neela said, "Grandma, I wish to put a question to them. Whoever gives me a satisfactory answer, I shall offer myself to him. I can't be marrying all three of them, you know that."

The old lady conveyed her message to the princes. First, Balaveera went to meet her. Neela asked him, "Suppose your father doesn't agree to our marriage, what would you do?"

"You can entirely depend on me, Neela. I'm sure he'll agree. If he doesn't, I shall try and convince him and carry out my wish," assured Balaveera.

Neela posed the same question to Athiveera. "If my father doesn't agree to our marriage, then it may not take place at all," said the prince, unhesitatingly.

Mahaveera's answer was quite different. "If my father will oppose our wedding, then I'm prepared to leave the palace and even forsake the country to marry you. I love you so much, Neela."

Neela then came out of her room, went straight to Balaveera, and put a garland over his neck.



The vampire ended his story there and turned to the king. "Why did Neela choose Balaveera as her husband? Is it because she was confident that he would be able to bring round his father? Athiveera had made it clear that he would not do anything which his father didn't approve of. Wouldn't he have been a better choice? Mahaveera, on the other hand, was willing to leave everything for her sake, professing his love for Neela. However, she rejected him in favour of Balaveera. Why? If you don't give me a satisfactory answer, remember your head will be blown to pieces."

Vikramaditya had his answer: "Neela was from a poor family. She could have taken a commoner as her husband. But here, three princes had come forward

to wed her. She thought of her future, and wondered who would she prefer. After all, the king had announced that he would hand over power to the one who married first. Mahaveera was ready to elope with her. Athiveera was unable to take a decision for himself and would leave everything to his father and his wish. However, Balaveera assured her that he would be able to convince his father about the choice he had made. That shows his worth and capability to wield power—qualities that would sustain him to rule the country. Hence her decision to marry Balaveera."

The vampire realised that Vikramaditya had outwitted him again, and so gave him the slip and flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him.



Resemblance

Was the cobra a human being in its previous birth? People wondered, when they saw the 6-foot-long cobra caught in Valangaiman, near Kumbakonam, some three or four months ago. It had marks resembling a human face, especially the eyes, eyebrows, nose, and mouth. A rare find, anyway.



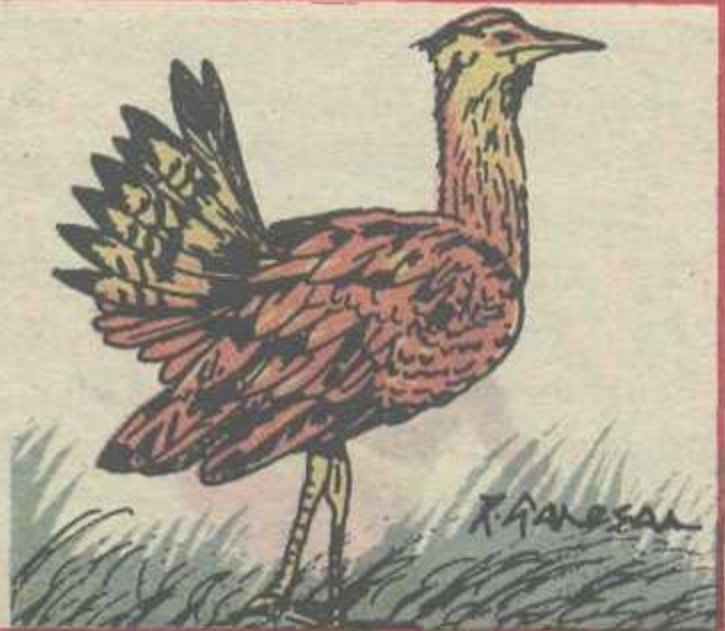
Pygmies

There are pygmies among hippopotamuses, too! Pygmy hippos are seen mostly in the lowland forests of Africa—in Nigeria, where it is an endangered species. It attains a height of about 75 cm—almost half of that of an ordinary hippo (150 cm)—and length of 2.5m. The pygmies are confined to swamps. While the hippos roam in the grasslands in the night and prefer water during the day, pygmy hippos do just the reverse. They feed on roots, grass, shoots and fruits. Incidentally, the word hippopotamus in Greek means 'water elephant'.



Bustard

Bird-lovers in India are happy that the Great Indian Bustard, once considered as endangered, has been sighted after several years in a forest belt in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. This rare bird used to be found in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh. Ever since the conservation scheme was launched, some 40 birds had found a habitat in the Rayalaseema region. The bustard is about 1m in height and feeds on locusts, grasshoppers, lizards, centipedes, and millipedes.





VEER HANUMAN

17

(Hanuman recapitulates his adventures on the way to Lanka and after reaching there. The Vanaras listen to him with awe and wonder. When he tells them of his meeting with Sita, they are all overjoyed. They start for Kishkindhya to convey the glad tidings to their king, Sugriva, and Rama and Lakshmana. On the way, they alight at Madhuvan, and enjoy themselves there.)

The Vanaras were very eager to know from Hanuman how he managed to meet Sita Devi. They listened to him with rapt attention when he narrated the events. "You remember we had set out in different directions in search of Sita Devi. We tried our best to search for her everywhere, but we did not succeed. We were getting

desperate when we got the information that she had been kidnapped by none else than Ravana. It was then that I offered to cross the sea over to Lanka, and you all saw me fly over the Mahendra mountain.

"As I proceeded, another beautiful mountain suddenly rose from the sea and prevented

HARBINGER OF GOOD NEWS





my progress. I wanted to crush the mountain, but there was no need for that. For, the mountain received me affectionately and told me how my father, Vayu-deva, the god of Wind, had rescued him from Lord Indra. It was the Mainak mountain. I was promised all help in the mission entrusted to me by Lord Rama. In fact, I was even persuaded to rest on the mountain for some days before proceeding to Lanka. But as I was anxious to complete my mission as early as possible, I declined the invitation and started. I had not gone far when a monster called Surasa tried to

swallow me. I contracted myself into a small figure and got into its mouth and also got out of it in a trice. Nobody had till now escaped from that monster, but when it saw me cleverly coming out of its mouth before it could shut it, it complimented me and blessed me.

"Once again I started on my journey. Now it was the turn of Simhika, a demoness, who caught hold of my shadow and held me up on my way. No, I did not allow her to get away so easily. I became a tiny figure, entered her stomach and tore it to give me an opening to come out. By the time I was through with all these adventures, I found myself in the precincts of Lanka.

"There I came upon Lankini, the demoness watching the entrance to the city. She would not allow me to get in. I conquered her and gained entry. Then I began combing the place for Sita Devi."

Hanuman paused for a while before continuing. "My search took me to all nooks and corners, but I could not find any trace of her. You can imagine my consternation and disappointment. I was not tired at all. At long last, I

found her in Asokavana. I went near her and told her that I had been sent by Lord Rama. She wouldn't believe me. Then I handed her the ring the Lord had given me. She was not willing to come with me. She said, she would wish her husband to fight Ravana to rescue her. I told her that there was no need for Lord Rama to go there just to kill Ravana, I was myself capable of achieving that, and I could myself bring her over here and entrust her to her husband. It wouldn't have been difficult for me to meet people like Ravana or his son Indrajit in combat. But Sita Devi would not approve of such action. What she wanted was, Ravana should meet with his doom at the hands of her husband. That was her vow. Now, it is for you all to decide what we should do and tell Lord Rama."

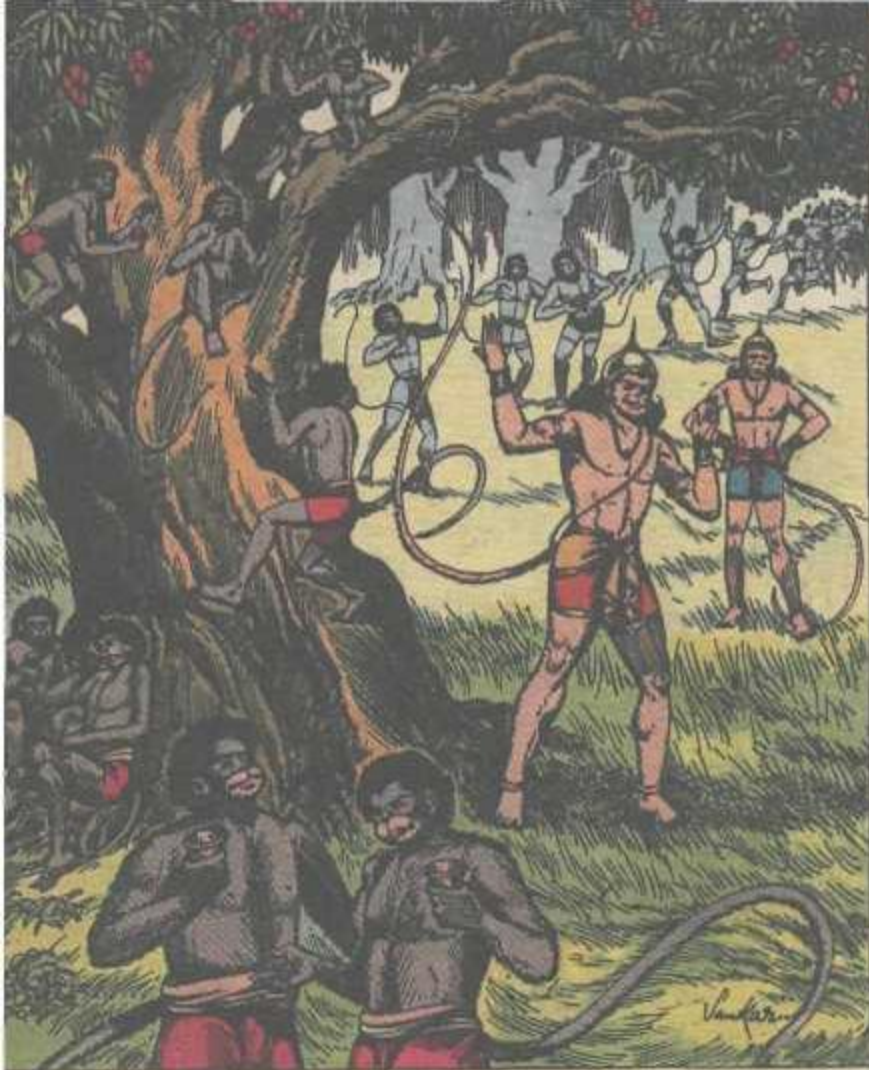
Prince Angada fully agreed with Hanuman. "Won't it be better if we can tell Rama that we have brought back Sita rather than we have traced her and met her? Won't Rama be happier then?"

Jambavan curbed their excitement over the proposition.



"What is the order that we were given? Only to find where Sita Devi had been taken, and by whom. This we have achieved. Should we go beyond that mission?" he reminded them.

The Vanaras now remembered what they had been sent for, as well as what Sita Devi had conveyed through Hanuman. They opined that they should immediately go and report to Lord Rama that Sita Devi had been found. They all started for Kishkindhya. On their way, they came upon a beautiful orchard with a garden full of lovely flowers and bowers. They alight-



ed there and indulged in merry-making. They plucked all sorts of fruits and ate them; they plucked flowers in plenty and drank the honey in them.

Though they had the permission of Prince Angada to indulge in such revelry, soon they forgot themselves and began to fight amongst themselves. Some of the Vanaras were so intoxicated that they soon fell down in slumber and snored. Some others started uprooting the trees and flower plants in the garden, breaking branches of those trees they could not damage, and creating all sorts of havoc.

Now the keeper of this garden called Madhuvan was Gatimukha, uncle of Sugriva. He tolerated everything to some extent. But when he realised that nothing would now be left of the garden, he ordered all the Vanaras to clear out. But no one paid any heed to him. They even attacked Gatimukha and drove him away.

Hanuman also encouraged them. "Don't be afraid of anyone. If anyone were to come here, I shall take care of him," he said. Prince Angada, too, did not restrain them. "Hanuman would not want any harm to come to us. So, you don't have to bother about anybody. Continue to be jolly," he told the Vanaras.

Now there was nothing to stop the Vanaras from taking over Madhuvan. They clashed with the watchmen and drove them away. The orchard and garden lay in ruins. Gatimukha gathered the few attendants who were still left there and faced the Vanaras, but they were thwarted by the Vanara gang led by Angada.

Gatimukha had no other go than run to Kishkindhya, where he fell at the feet of Sugriva. "What happened?" asked the





Vanara king. "Why are you so perturbed? Has any danger come to you?"

"I don't know how to put it across to you," wailed Gatimukha. "Nothing like this had happened to me before. You, too, hadn't found me wanting in my duties, have you? But something has happened now, and it puts me to shame and may even change your opinion of me. But I'm not to be blamed. Your son, Angada, and a troop of Vanaras have destroyed Madhuvan. They came there, drank the honey from the flowers, and got intoxicated. At first they fought among

themselves, then fought with all of us, driving us away. The garden is in ruins now. I couldn't help running here to tell you. Please forgive me."

Lakshmana, who was sitting with Sugriva and Rama at that time, asked, "What exactly has happened?"

"Remember we had sent some Vanaras to south to search for Sita Devi?" said Sugriva. "They've all come back and are now in Madhuvan. They became intoxicated and have destroyed the entire garden. They seem to have achieved their mission and must be flush with joy. I guess Hanuman has met Sita Devi. He is capable of all that. If Angada, Jambavan, and Hanuman set out to achieve something, they won't come back without completing it. So, we can rest assured that they're bringing good news."

Both Rama and Lakshman were happy to hear the glad tidings from Sugriva. "I inherited Madhuvan from my father," said Sugriva. "I had deputed his brother, Gatimukha, to look after the garden. And there has been no dereliction of duty on



his part till now. It's only today that he seems to have got into trouble. If I'm certain that the Vanaras had damaged the garden, forgetting themselves in their success, I'm willing to forgive them." He now turned to Gatimukha. "You may go back and tell them that Rama, Lakshmana, and myself are eagerly waiting for news of Sita Devi. Ask them to come here without delay."

Gatimukha returned to Madhuvan after assuring Sugriva that he would send the Vanaras post-haste to Kishkindhya. On reaching the garden, he told Angada: "I've just come back from Kishkindhya after meeting King Sugriva and informing him of all that has happened here. He has asked me to tell you that you all should go back to Kishkindhya as quick as possible. I'm prepared to bear with all that the Vanaras have done to the garden. After all, you've a greater right on Madhuvan than I have. Anyway, please hasten to Kishkindhya. They're all anxiously waiting for you."

Angada called the Vanaras together and said, "It's time we hurried to Kishkindhya, now



that you've all made yourselves merry. But be careful; you'll have to meet King Sugriva straight-away. He's waiting for us."

The Vanaras immediately got ready to proceed to Kishkindhya. Meanwhile, Sugriva was telling Rama about Hanuman. "He must have certainly met Sita Devi. If they've all come back within the stipulated time, it only indicates that they have achieved their mission. And that means an end to your trials."

By then they could hear the cries of victory from the Vanaras who were approaching Kishkindhya. Ere long, they were all

SUPERSTITION

Krishna and Govinda were friends, residing in Panayur village. One day, they set out for the weekly market some ten miles away. They had hardly stepped out of their colony when they saw the milkman coming from the opposite direction. He had a pot of milk in his hand. "Ah! That's a good omen," remarked Krishna.

Govindan had no belief in superstitions. "There's nothing like a good omen or bad. Whatever is to happen will happen, that's all," he cut short Govinda. They proceeded on their way, and reached the market-place by and by.

They found preparations afoot for a meeting. They were told that an important person was to speak there. They joined the crowd. Soon, the speaker arrived. By a strange coincidence, his speech was mostly about superstition and omens! He was listened to with rapt attention. "That was a good speech!" commented Govinda, echoing the general praise.

"Didn't I tell you that the milkman with the pot of milk was a good omen? See! We could listen to a good speech," responded Krishna.





Who invented the aeroplane?

R.J.S. Judi Jesudoss, Tambaram

As early as the 15th century, the famous Italian painter, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), made deep studies into the different aspects of aerodynamics, among many other sciences. Subsequently several people worked on the art of using air currents to fly unpowered aircraft—like birds 'gliding' in the air. The German aviation pioneer, Otto Lilienthal (1848-1896), was the first to fly a glider, successfully. This inspired the Wright Brothers—Wilbur (1867-1912) and Orville (1871-1948)—of the U.S.A. to perfect a piloted glider in 1902, followed by the first powered machine in 1903. They were the first to make a successful powered flight, near Kitty Hawk, in North Carolina. It was the precursor of the modern aeroplane.

Is the Himalayas in India or China?

B.N. Sharath, Bellary

This vast mountain system of Central Asia, extending from Kashmir in the West to Assam in the east, covers the Southern part of Tibet (now part of China), Nepal, Sikkim (an Indian State), and Bhutan. The Himalayas have the highest peak in the world, Mount Everest, and Kanchenjunga, the third highest, on the Nepal-Sikkim border. For climbing both of them, prior permission has to be obtained from Nepal, which is now considering a total ban on any more attempts.

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Natarajan



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